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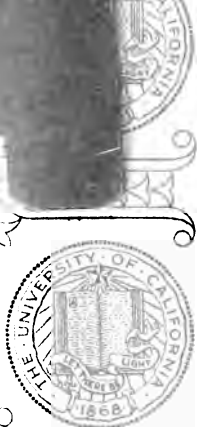
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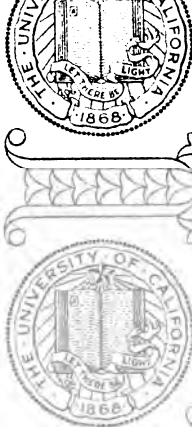
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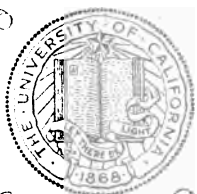


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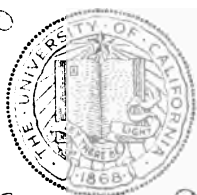
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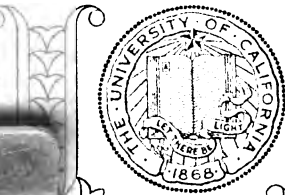
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THE COMPLEAT OXFORD MAN



CALIFORNIA



[*Frontispiece.*

THE CITY OF SPIRES.

THE
COMPLEAT OXFORD
MAN

BY
A. HAMILTON GIBBS

WITH PREFACE BY
COSMO HAMILTON

THE
COMPLEAT OXFORD
MAN

LONDON
SKEFFINGTON & SON
34, SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND W.C.
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1911

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PREFACE.

IT is not a matter of wonder that of books written about Oxford there is no end. Oxford has been, is, and will be one of the few places in England which sets up the *cacoëthes scribendi*. There is no library that does not contain not only those books of Oxford which are appropriately called "works," but those slim volumes of verse and parody that have caught something of the spirit of their author's time. Nearly all of them are interesting, and many are valuable. One or two, containing the Juvenilia of Oxford men who have written their names on the scroll, are not only interesting and valuable, but witty, delightful, and essentially Oxford. There are, of course, others. These, written by the all-too-daring lady novelist who invariably disguises the Alma Mater by calling her Oxbridge and similar ineptitudes, and who nearly always regards the don with a sort of sneaking affection which is peculiarly feminine and romantic, are generally funny and often painful. It has, however, been left to the present author to give us the Compleat Oxford Man—according to himself.

It seems to me to be a rather daring thing to call

PREFACE.

a volume by a title so omniscient, a word defined by Webster as all-beholding, all-knowing, all-discerning, all-searching, all-seeing. After all, however, is it so difficult to draw a truthful picture of the Compleat Oxford Man? Is he so complex a creature as to be impossible of portrayal or of caricature? Naturally enough the Oxford man lays himself open to many treatments. The average London policeman, for instance, who knows him very slightly from the brief acquaintance of a boat-race and a Rugger night, would, in all probability, paint a rather distorted portrait of him. It would certainly be interesting and instructive to see his portrait as delineated by a scout and a landlady. It is doubtful whether the average proctor would be very sympathetic in his draughtsmanship. Perhaps the most sympathetic portraits of all would be drawn by the college porter and boatman. It has, however, been left to the present author to give us the Compleat Oxford Man—according to himself.

As a matter of fact Oxford men have drawn compleat portraits of themselves in the best of all University journals, the *Magazine*, the *Isis*, and the *'Varsity*. Week by week, term by term, year after year, new generations of Oxford men have painted themselves and one another in these papers, and in the bound volumes of them there is to be found a series of admirable pictures of Oxford and Oxford men by writers who have since achieved fame, and who might never have written at all but for the journals which encouraged their

PREFACE.

maiden efforts. Nevertheless, it has been left to the present author to give us the Compleat Oxford Man—according to himself.

Casus ubique valet ; semper tibi pendeat hamus.
Quo minimè credas gurgite, piscis erit—

COSMO HAMILTON.

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THE Compleat Oxford Man.

CHAPTER I.

OXFORD.

"GOOD-BYE, old boy. Have a good time and let me know when you run short of money."

The engine had given two shrieks and was panting its way out of Paddington station. Having given a parting wave to his father, He—the institution of He—the boy was going up to be an Oxford man, an undergraduate—drew his head in at the window and sank down on to the magazine-littered seat.

Oxford! An Oxford man! By Jove, what a world of unknown delights these magic words conjured up! Oxford, the city of spires, the wonderful place where people got blues and degrees. He was going to that place, to be one of them. He was in the train which was actually taking him there at that very moment. It was amazing, appalling, glorious. In less than an hour He would be alone in a different world, to do every-

THE COMPLEAT OXFORD MAN.

thing on his own initiative, new, and raw, and green. A shiver of nervousness ran through him at the thought of making hideous *faux pas*. Suppose He should mistake a don for a scout; or still worse, an undergraduate for a scout! By Jove! how frightfully fast the train was going. How quickly He would be there!

He was no longer an inky school-boy, but a man, an Oxford man, with four glorious years in front of him in which to become famous. He was going to row. Putney already loomed out of the future. He saw himself, clad in shorts, with a dark blue muffler round his neck, helping to carry down the Eight to the raft with a vast crowd watching. Good Lord! how slow this rotten old train was. Why didn't it buck up?

The magazines lay unopened on the seat staring at him. But they didn't interest him. He sat in the corner, his eyes fixed on the flying country, looking intently, eagerly into the future. An undergraduate, eh? He pulled out his pipe, the sign of his emancipation, and, with hardly accustomed fingers, filled it from a very new pouch. An Oxford man, eh? He puffed out a cloud of smoke proudly and joyfully. He could smoke whenever He chose now, except, of course, at lectures, and so on. Dash it! He swallowed some, and coughed until the tears ran down his cheeks.

What a time He'd have! He'd work like a nigger, and go in for rowing like a nigger, and have a gorgeous time with the others. Progs?

OXFORD.

He wondered what they were really like. Old men with beards, most probably, whom it would be perfectly easy to blarney. And bullers, too ! It seemed rather curious to call them bulldogs, those people who escorted the proctors. But anyway, they wouldn't worry him much. He wasn't going to get progged, thanks, very much. It wasn't good enough ever to get progged and sent down. He wanted to put in a full four years without missing a day, an hour . . . Great Scott ! The train squealed as the brakes were put on and it came to a standstill. He looked hurriedly out and saw the word Oxford in white letters on a station lamp. His heart beat furiously, and, hastily getting together his various chattels, He leaped down to the platform.

“Porter, sir ?”

He gave his gladstone to the sturdy man and followed him along to the luggage van. The platform was crowded. The train had emptied itself and men surged after their luggage. He eyed them wonderingly. Many of them wore ties of different colours, some had enormous scarves also coloured. He asked himself who and what these wonderful beings were, and what they had got the colours for, and how soon He would be entitled to wear one himself.

“Do you want a 'ansom, sir ?” The porter had rescued his trunk.

“Yes,” said He, and followed the man back along the platform and through the barrier. He tipped the man royally, feeling that it was an

THE COMPLEAT OXFORD MAN.

epoch-making moment, and proudly telling the cabby, "St. John's College," sprang into the cab. His rooms were in college. What on earth should He do when He got there? The horse dived down under the station bridge and broke into a lumbering canter up the incline and turned off to the left of the tram-lines. Various shabby-looking tramps looked interrogatively at the cab as they passed, but turned away disappointedly. He wondered what they were, until he saw one running beside a hansom, and then he realised that they would lift down the trunks in the hopes of making an odd bob or so. He had never been to Oxford, and as the cab turned into the narrow streets leading to Worcester and Beaumont Street, his heart sank a little. It was very dingy and slummy. They turned into Beaumont Street.

"I say!" He thought, "that's a college. Wonder which it is. Looks rather nice."

At last the cab stopped outside the enclosure in front of St. John's College. "This is great!" thought He. "Looks simply ripping!"

A clean shaven man, well dressed, and young, came out of the lodge and lifted off his trunks. "What name, sir?" he said.

He gave his name. "This must be a scout. Decent feller!" He thought.

"Your rooms are in the new buildings. I'll show you, sir," said the scout.

"Thanks," said the undergraduate humbly. He followed the scout through the lodge, caught a

OXFORD.

glimpse of a quad with statues over the archways, was hurried through a passage past the hall, where He saw the word "buttery" painted in white over a door, and came into another quad.

"Number one staircase, sir," said the scout, and they dived up some stairs until the undergraduate saw with a thrill of surprise, delight, and pride, his own name and initials painted in white over the doorway. The scout put down the gladstone and told him that his trunk would be brought up. He opened his mouth to ask a rain of questions, but a wave of funk came over him, and He let the scout go without a word. He put his hat and coat down and looked round his room. An October sun crept in through the window and relieved the bareness of the walls. The colour of the walls was all right, He thought, and the arm-chair looked comfortable. "What on earth shall I do?" He asked himself, wandering through into the bedroom. He nosed round, looked out into the quad, and returned to the sitter. "Ah, yes! Caution money!" He pulled out a cheque made out to the bursar, for what seemed to him a tremendous amount of bullion, and made his way down to the lodge again. The whole place was packed. Sheepish-looking men stood about in squares and gowns obviously freshmen like himself. Others in wonderful socks and smart bowlers shook each other warmly by the hand and asked, "What sort of vac. they'd put in." He couldn't see the man who had shown him his room, and couldn't see another scout, so He stood round

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watching and wondering where the bursar hung out. A man came towards him, heavily moustached, in square and long gown. "Jove, that must be a don," thought He. "I'll ask him!" He crossed over and hatting him said, "I beg your pardon, sir, but can you tell me where I shall find the Bursar?"

The man reddened. "Oh I—er, I'm a freshman, you know, and I don't know at all."

"Oh, sorry." With tingling ears He, the Oxford man, hurried off, cursing himself for a fool.

At last He found a scout and the bursary and left his cheque. Then He wandered out to buy a gown. "Scholar's or commoner's, sir?" asked the shopman.

"What?" asked He, puzzled. "I haven't an idea. Just a gown, an undergraduate gown."

"Yes, sir,"—the man didn't even smile—"but are you a scholarship man, or did you take Smalls?"

"I took smalls."

"Thank you, sir. Here you are," and the man gave him the required article, with a well-fitting square, both of which He paid for and carried off. Hall was at seven. He had found out by much polite questioning that one fed there and that one wore a gown. He resolved, therefore, to return to his rooms and get a bit straight. With the parcel under his arm He came down the Corn, up and down which undergraduate-laden cabs chased each other endlessly. He crossed the street by

OXFORD.

the Martyrs' Memorial wondering what it could be, and entering the lodge, went straight up to his room. Opening the window, He sat down in the manner of a proprietor with his elbows on the ledge and looked out.

Straight opposite was a curious red, barrack-like building, unpleasant to the eye. He looked away from it quickly then, but afterwards He came to know it quite affectionately as the Puseum. In the middle of the road stood a line of patient cabs, whose drivers sat inside reading evening papers. Behind them the shops, through the almost leafless branches of the trees. There were a paper shop, an ironmonger's, a stationer's, and a baker's. Above these were lodgings. He eyed them, keenly wondering if anybody did really live over a shop. On the right of the Puseum his eye was caught and held by a low built house, all of whose windows were open. Three or four men came to the windows, evidently undergraduates, smoking. They seemed to be passing the time of day cheerily with every girl who passed.

"That's pretty average cool," thought the undergraduate.

An old tram dawdled along with about two people on it. Immediately under his window, hatless men strolled slowly and unconcernedly along arm-in-arm, cigarette in mouth, talking quietly. The undergraduate recognised several of them as having been on his train. He was moved to deep humility by their calm manner.

THE COMPLEAT OXFORD MAN.

They had only been in the place an hour and yet here they were perfectly at home, as if they had never been away. "Look as if they'd bought the place," thought the undergraduate. "Blues of course! That's what they are."

At seven He heard a bell, and thoughtfully made his way down. He went in nervously with the crowd and was duly shepherded to a seat, as were all the other freshmen. A little group of dons stood chattering in gowns and dress clothes in front of the fire. The other years went to their own tables and looked the freshers over interestedly. The dons moved up to the high table, and one of them in a large carved chair at the head of the table rapped with a knife. A man in a flowing gown marched up and read out a Latin Grace.

The meal, as far as the freshers were concerned, was a very quiet one. They didn't know each other, and simply ate with watchful eyes. A scout brought in a huge scone and put it down in front of a man two seats away. "With the compliments of Mr. Jennings," he said. Jennings? That was the man who rowed in last year's boat race! The fresher, in front of whom it had been placed, looked nervously at it. "What do I do with this?" he asked his neighbour.

"I don't know," said he, becoming equally worried. The scout explained its use. The man took a pull at it and passed it on to the next man, and so it went slowly round the table.

When the menu held no more items for him, He wondered if He had to wait for another grace. He

OXFORD.

saw men from the second table going out, but was still doubtful, so He waylaid the next passing scout.

"I say," He said. "Do we have to wait for another grace?"

"Oh no, sir," said the scout with a smile.

"Thanks"; and feeling rather amazed at his boldness, He got up and walked down the hall and out.

By eleven o'clock He had unpacked all his things, arranged his books and photos, tried the arm-chair, and switched off his bedroom light. He pulled the pillow down more comfortably. "An Oxford man at last! Great Scott!" He said. "I feel like a fish out of water."

CHAPTER II.

A FRESHER'S WINE.

THE old clock perched on the top of the chapel roof solemnly struck the half hour after seven. A sort of mist had come up, and this, combined with evening gloom, gave a mystic appearance to the quad. It was impossible to make out, from where the undergraduate stood by the porter's lodge, what exactly was the mound of which one could just perceive a feeble outline that lay piled up in the centre of the quad. From behind the lighted windows all around came the sounds of several pianos, all going at once, each playing a different tune, occasionally added to by a loud chorus of voices. From the hall came the rattle of plates and knives and forks. Phew! It was cold. He turned into the warm, cosy lodge.

"'Evening, Crooks. May I have a warm?"

"'Evening, sir. Yes, sir; come in," answered Crooks. He was a short little man with a long moustache and a cheery smile, just now rather anxious. He was sitting in the one wooden arm-chair at his desk, which was covered with papers, letters, forms, pens, and ink. Just above, on a

A FRESHER'S WINE.

row of nails, hung multitudes of keys of all sizes, while at the end of the row there was one giant key—the main door. Above them on a shelf was a statue of Queen Victoria, surrounded by three huge silver cups, the rowing trophies won by the scouts.

"Well, Crooks, how's things?" said the undergraduate, perching himself on one of the lockers in front of the bright fire.

"I expect we'll have a rowdy time all right to-night, sir," said Crooks, busily addressing a pile of envelopes. "There's some of 'em been just livin' for this since beginning of term. Say they're goin' to break the whole place up, they do. But they won't do it while I'm here, I tell yer, sir."

"They always say they're going to do that every year. But it never comes off," said the undergraduate soothingly.

"'Ark at 'em now, sir." Shrieks of laughter came from across the quad, and a crowd rushed up a staircase and burst into some man's room. "They're gettin' ready for it," he added.

The clock struck eight, and from every room and staircase men poured down and made their way to the hall. Others crowded in from the street and left coats and caps in the lodge, and with them the undergraduate went into the already overcrowded hall.

The high table where the dons usually sat was occupied by blues, captains of the various clubs, and senior men; while the other tables, down the sides and centres of the hall, all laid out with

THE COMPLEAT OXFORD MAN.

fruit, and flowers, and wine, were surrounded by the rest of the college. The freshers were a little nervous, and consequently quite quiet. They did not know exactly what was going to happen. The others, however, made up for their quietness by hurling jests, and crackers, and fruit at each other across the table, making a deafening din. The pictures of the college founders all round the walls in between the electric bulbs made a strange contrast with this twentieth century, very alive mass of undergraduates. Up in the gallery over the doorway, half concealed by a picture, was the band, uniformed, smiling, and German, instruments in hand, ready for the signal to strike up, while the scouts in dress clothes waited round the door. The high table sat down. Everybody else did the same, and with a crash the band blared out a popular musical comedy air. Scouts hurried round with wine, fruit, and plates. Chinese crackers suddenly jumped about in a series of explosions, shouts of laughter filled the place, and through it all the Germans blew and bowed and piped lustily. When most of the fruit was eaten, and cigars and cigarettes made a blue haze over everything, the president rose and said, "Gentlemen!" hammering on the table with a spoon for silence. When he was seen, loud cheering and cries of "Up, up! up!" burst out, until he stood, as steadily as possible, on his chair.

The band, however, had not seen him rise, and just as he opened his mouth to make his speech,

A FRESHER'S WINE.

they blared out a new tune. Instantly losing all his dignity, the president stooped, picked up a banana which lay on his plate, and hurled it at the Germans in the gallery. This acted as a signal. Every man in the hall imitated him and a rain of oranges, apples, and green figs crashed among the brass instruments, which stopped with a wail as the band took hurried cover behind the picture. Then the president made his speech, punctuated with gales of cheering and laughter, in which he proposed the health of the first year, coupled with the name of the senior scholar. All the other years drank this standing, singing with the band accompaniment in a key as near as possible to the one in which it was sung, "For they are jolly good fellows." Then, amid yells of "Speech!" and "Up, Up!" the senior scholar of the first year climbed nervously on to his chair.

"Gentlemen, I—I——"

"Hurrah! Keep it up! Faster, faster!" yelled the crowd.

"Gentlemen, I—I feel a perfect fool——!"

"Yah! you look it! Cheer up, darling! Give her ten now, boys!"

The fresher, a small, spectacled person, clever beyond his years, struggled gamely through somehow, and sitting down hurriedly, buried his burning face in a glass of hock, while the band, to his great relief, started playing again. The crowd hammered out a tune with knives, and feet, and fists. Then more speeches and more toasts, and

THE COMPLEAT OXFORD MAN.

the cigars decreased with marvellous rapidity—until the hall was suddenly more lighted from without, and someone yelled “Bonner! Bonner!”

✓ The president then rose again. “Gentlemen,” he said, “we will adjourn to the bonner.”

Everybody rose, and a wild stampede—sweeping aside the unwary scouts, who, not expecting it, had not discreetly retired—was made into the quad, where the mass in the middle was blazing fiercely, sending up thirty-foot flames. The band followed, and taking up their stand in a far corner of the quad, played dance music and waltzes. In the strong but flickering light of the enormous bonfire, the quad looked like a Doré illustration of Dante, with the fiends dancing and fighting round in demoniac glee, some, the freshers, carrying bundles of faggots on their shoulders with which to feed the leaping, hungry flames. A knot gathered round the band and yelled German and French epithets at them, some seizing the instruments and making hideous bursting noises through the brasses.

At the windows of the dean's rooms all the women-servants had their faces pressed against the glass watching the scene. Several men saw them, and dashing up tried to kiss them through the glass. The servants retired hurriedly, screaming with laughter.

“A don, a don, my kingdom for a don!” yelled a voice, and a rush was made as one came through the quad. He was instantly seized, raised shoulder high by a struggling, heaving scrum, and

A FRESHER'S WINE.

carried round the bonner until he made a speech. He was finally let down when his cap had been torn off and pitched into the flames, his tie disarranged, his hair ruffled by mysterious hands, and his appearance made wholly unacademic.

Side parties rushed away on mysterious errands up staircases, and sounds of smashing came faintly down, as some objectionable person's room was artistically but thoroughly dismantled. Tin baths tobogganed down the stairs and crashed among the crowd; squares and gowns festooned the quad, the statues wore strange and domestic crowns, the trees were hung with articles of furniture, and more than one man had to change his clothes before the witching hour of twelve was boomed out by the big clock. Then out came Crooks with his big key. "Now then, gentlemen, the proctors will be out! It's gone twelve. If *you* please. I don't want to get *you* into trouble, but you know the rules."

The outside college men gradually dispersed, and sang their way home through the streets regardless of straying proctors. The bonfire was dying down, and except for scattered yells from distant rooms, and an occasional crash of overturned furniture, the academic spirit again came over the quad. The Fifth was over.

CHAPTER III.

THE STRANGERS' DEBATE.

SOMEHOW or other, every man who goes up to the 'Varsity becomes a member of the "Ugger". Of course, therefore, I, knowing nothing about it was keen to belong, and within the first fortnight of my début as an undergraduate was duly accorded the honour of membership. My time is nearly up—next year, in fact, I shall no longer be an undergraduate—and yet I have never discovered the reason why one joins the Union.

In the rules I discovered how officers were elected terminally, and, among other things, how there was a Strangers' Debate. This point worried me. I asked myself who the strangers might be. I put careful questions to the older members, and was rewarded by learning that the Strangers' Debate was *the* event of the term, the time when some great man from the House was honoured by an invitation from the Union Society to come down, and, after having heard the Society speak, to speak himself to the thunderous applause of a crowded house of critical and appreciative listeners.

THE STRANGERS' DEBATE.

The great day came. How can I say what excitement I felt? I was a fresher then. At the first call of the scout I sprang into the bath. Breakfast was hurriedly eaten, lectures cut, the streets prowled, and at last, lunch. In the afternoon the coach's language about my habits was even more than usually terse. My one thought was for the debate, and after countless weary hours I left the dining hall in college with still a half hour to pass. A great thought seized me. "Where was that fellow Jack?"

In three leaps I was up his staircase and burst into his room. "Of course you're coming?" I panted.

"Rather!" said he. "My dear chap, I've been counting the days to this."

"Have you? So have I. Come on, let's get decent seats."

"Righto," said he, and we hurried down through the quad and into the wet streets.

The rain had at last stopped, and the glistening pavements and muddy "High" were crowded. Hatless men strolled along by twos and threes, glancing at the brilliantly lighted shops—with a keen eye for passing petticoats—the rickety old horse tram doddered past; the cabmen, lined up against the railings in front of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, exchanged broadsides with all and sundry; paper boys jostled each other to be first to get rid of a late paper, and swore openly on receiving only a ha'penny; smart ladies with roving eyes and coloured uppers to their boots

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passed dons and proctors without turning a hair ; and the town band, surrounded by townees, girls, and street urchins, played away lustily, optimistic in spite of the weather.

We turned down the "Corn" and were held up for a moment at Ship Street by a Socialist gathering. A tall, dirty, shabby-looking man was standing, raised up, talking loudly and wildly to a large audience. Two policemen stood near on the path, and several men in gowns were ragging the Socialist, who was rapidly losing his temper and his aitches. "I am a hundergraduate of Ruskin 'All," he proclaimed, and the rest of his words were drowned in a burst of cheering. Over went his stand, and the policemen rushed in. The crowd heaved and surged, yelling wildly, and we dodged up Michael Street to the back entrance of the Union.

"Here we are," said Jack. "We've got ten minutes. I expect it'll be crowded already."

We hurried in. Among the "Aye" and "No" front benches, which were more or less cushioned, sat two dozen or so men. Without exception they were curious looking creatures with large foreheads and spectacles, and untidy hair, trousers baggy at the knee. Some of them held pencils and sheets of blank paper. The gallery was overflowing with members of "Maggie" Hall and Somerville, a few Oxford residents, and a scattering of dons. A buzz of conversation ran round.

A volley of clapping came from the gallery, and

THE STRANGERS' DEBATE.

in walked the president with the member of Parliament and the officers. Sure enough, numbers of men followed, and the hall was practically filled by the time the president had taken his seat.

In a speaking silence the president rose. "Order! order! I call upon the secretary to read the minutes of the last meeting."

The secretary rose and read from a minute book.

"Can you hear?" whispered Jack.

"Not a word," said I.

The secretary sat down. The junior librarian then read his weekly list of books at the request of the president. Soft applause followed, and the president, rising again, announced private business.

Silence followed.

"Sir," came a voice from the corner. All eyes were fixed upon the speaker. "May I ask whether the steward, whom I saw eating a banana just now, is fed by the society, and if so, what he is allowed per annum for that purpose, and if the junior treasurer keeps a detailed account of his daily meals and their cost?"

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hmm

The president rose. "The steward is not fed by this society, sir, and so, of course, the junior treasurer has a little time to himself."

Another roar of laughter, and the president sat down.

After several other witty questions of this nature had been asked, the president rose again

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and declared that, as no other member had any other questions to ask of the officers relative to the discharge of their official duties, the house would proceed to public business. He read out the question for debate, and called upon the mover to open the debate.

"Now for it," said Jack.

But to our surprise, no sooner had the president sat down, than everybody on the floor of the hall got up and poured out of the building. We were left with the gallery, a few other men on the "Aye" and "No" benches, and the officers of the society.

"What the deuce is happening?" asked Jack.

"Lord knows," said I; "let's wait."

The mover moved; the opposer opposed; the third speaker spoke. An hour and a half had passed. The Great Man had been speaking for half an hour. I heard one word in six, and that one conveyed no meaning to me. I turned and looked at Jack. He was fast asleep, with his head down upon the back of the bench in front.

"Let's go. I'm doggo, and bored stiff," said I, waking him. We passed quickly out into the street.

"Never again!" said Jack.

"Rather not!" said I.

CHAPTER IV.

TRIAL EIGHTS.

To the President of the O.U.B.C. the October term is one of anxiety, worry, sleepless nights. The vital question at stake is the success of the classic annual struggle from Putney to Mortlake. To the "gate" side of the matter he does not, of course, give even the most casual of thoughts. The millions of roughs, toughs, boys and girls, undergraduates, gentlemen, and gentlewomen who line the tow-path, the barges, the inns, and the thousand places turned temporarily into grand stands do not distract his thoughts by the fraction of an inch. It is for the honour of his 'Varsity with all its individual colleges, the greater credit and renown of the rowing men, and, last, but not least, his own reputation as a good president, that he consecrates his waking hours by day and his dreams by night to this Titanic undertaking.

On his shoulders, though the outside world does not realise the fact at all, and on him alone, rests the burden of this almost overwhelming and certainly most awe-inspiring task. It is for him to choose impartially from among the hundreds

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of oarsmen at Oxford for the eight best, the eight who outshine all the others in style of rowing, amount of work, knowledge of watermanship, and general finish—who are, in short, the only eight men to represent Oxford against the keen rival, Cambridge. And the Trial Eights race is the final event by which he makes his momentous and unbiassed choice. Little wonder, then, that the Michaelmas term is for him a time of stress both mental and physical. As is reported daily, but very laconically in the sporting press, the president personally conducts the aspirants for the boat on a twofold trip down to Iffley and back, giving each man personal exhortation as to his method of rowing and his moral habits. So important is this daily coaching that—and this fact is but little known—all the other crews make way when the Trial boat comes along. The manner of this vitally important elimination is the subject among the uninitiated of vast surmise and conjecture, the reality known only to the elect, who consecrate their days and persons to the oiled thwart.

“Whitman,” says the captain of the college boat, “you are wanted at two to-morrow afternoon at the boathouse for the trial. Do your derndest.” Whitman has been to Henley last summer. Their boat has won their Leanders, and so, of course, the crew think themselves the last word in oarsmanship—and, indeed, it is no mean feat to win the Ladies’ Plate. Whitman shares this belief, and his heart leaps at the great

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news. At last they have realised that he is a great oar. Not for nothing has he toiled from his fresherdom on fixed and sliding seats, shivered in hard frosts and deluges of rain, and sweated in burning sun in the long days of his learning. His chance has come. He sleeps not a wink that night, and at five minutes to two next day walks tremblingly with seven other quaking, sweated, and shorted oarsmen into the presence.

"Tumble in," says the Great One. "You'll find the order in the book." Whitman finds that he is to row at bow.

Now is the great moment at hand. Now are all his dreams of immortal glory actually within his grasp. It is for him to win fame now that his trial is to take place, now that the president is waiting to praise his rowing, and, if necessary, to advise him in the minor details. How he has dreamed of this wonderful journey! Silently they tumble in. They are pushed off from the floating raft, the president watching, pipe in hand, from his horse.

"Forward, ready, paddle!" yells cox, and with a lurch and a roll they start down to the lasher, the president trotting silently, watchfully, alongside.

"Head!" booms cox as the other boats are not quick enough in getting to the side. "Easy all!"

Panting and hot they stop. After a few terse, chosen words of general advice, the president tells cox to "take her on to the lasher." There they easy again and turn round. Feelings of hope,

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despair, and self-congratulation surge in each man's breast as he feels that he has been rowing on the top of his form or "simply rottenly."

"Stroke!" calls the president, the whole boat stiffening to attention—"You're bucketing like the devil. Keep it long.—Seven, your time's hopeless. Watch it.—Six, get your stomach well over before using your slide. At present you're riding it.—Five, you're digging like a market gardener, and making the boat roll. Keep it light.—Four, you've made a fine art of slacking. Put some work into it.—Three, the stretcher is the place to get to work on, not with your arms.—Two, have you ever been on a slide before?—Bow, why in Heaven's name do you row with your arms? Do it with your weight and get sharp on to it. Take her on, cox."

With feelings of despair they all plug on, and finally arrive back at the boat-house. The president has already gone in. The second journey resembles the first, except that the president, being tired, points his language a little more. Whitman returns to his college barge, and is instantly surrounded by all the crowd in various stages of dressing.

"How did you get on? What did he say to you? Are you going to get your Blue?" Questions buzz round him.

"The only words he said to me were, 'You're rowing with your arms. Do it with your weight, and get sharp on to it.'"

Next day Whitman does not row.

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And so day after day the president quietly weeds out all the men sent in from the lower boats and small colleges. All these men, whose secret ambitions of getting their Blue are revealed only under pledge of deepest secrecy to their most intimate friends, all these men are cast from the heights of hope and longing to the pit of hopelessness, with "not an earthly." Day by day fewer men from the lower boats row in the trial, those who are seen in it belonging to the first five on the river.

A week before the race, the president casually asks the secretary to come round and have tea with him.

"Well, Joe," says the secretary, a huge pipe between his lips, "who's going in?"

"Chuck over a piece of paper and a pencil and I'll make a list. Why should I, though? You're the blooming secretary, why shouldn't you have a turn at the work?" asks the Great One, reaching for a "hotter."

"Right," says the secretary, "I'm ready. Bow? Is the B.N.C. man staying in?"

"B.N.C. man? Oh, you mean that freak with the round back? Not much, with a face like that. No, the House man's going bow."

"But he's not nearly as good an oar," protests the secretary.

"P'raps not, but he's a dashed good chap for all that. Put him at bow."

"Right," says the secretary, putting the House man's name. "I suppose," he went on, "that

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Teddy Hall man will row two? He does heaps of work."

"Teddy Hall?" echoes the president, "what the devil is Teddy Hall? Oh, I remember, it's that funny looking crowd that dress somewhere on the tow-pagger. Good Lord, no. Can't possibly have people looking at the crew and reading two, so and so. Teddy Hall! No, let's put that Magdalen man at two. Yes, and the other House man from Eton at three. P'raps they aren't quite so useful but, dash it all, Teddy Hall." And so on through the boat.

"Well, how about stroke?" says the secretary at last. "You must keep that St. John's man in."

"Must!" said the president, shaking out his pipe. "Rats! My dear old man, you don't understand. I'm president, and I like to do my pals a good turn. The St. John's man is all right, and a fine oar, and so on, but hang it all, you know, one must stand by one's college. What? We are both House and we must watch it. Jones of Christ Church is going to row stroke if I know anything about it."

"Right," says the secretary. "That's the lot."

"Well, that's fixed up satisfactorily, eh, old man?" said the president cheerily. "Good night. Send that list off to the *Sporter*. See you to-morrow."

CHAPTER V.

THE LECTURE.

IT so happened, as, curiously enough, it always does happen, that the particular set of lectures which Jack Felthropp was to attend for the greater benefit of his final schools, started at the precise hour when every right-minded undergraduate is recouping after a strenuous afternoon's work at sport, over tea and hotters and cigarettes. Consequently he strode out of his room, a note-book wrapped in his gown, breathing slaughter and threatenings against the iniquitous system of afternoon lectures.

The dank cold of a particular unpleasant November evening did not tend to improve his temper, and he hurried along savagely. The lecture was to be held at Trinity, so Jack entered Balliol from the Giler and cut through the ancient quad. The tombstone, carved by loving friends in memory of a man who had been sent down, caught his eye as he skirted the lawn and cheered him somewhat as he crossed the further quad, passed through the lodge into the Broad and turned in at Trinity. The porter, a crusty, monosyllabic individual, suffering from a touch of

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asthma, sent him on his way churlishly ; and Jack, cursing all lectures from the bottom of his heart, pushed open the door of the hall.

A rush of light and warm air met him with a most comforting effect as he went in. The hall, with its oak panelling and oil paintings and glowing fire, was already full, although the Regius Professor had not arrived. Jack looked round for a comfortable seat near the fire. The only vacant one was next to a girl who had her back towards him.

"Can't be helped," thought Jack. "Here goes."

The buzz of conversation which had ceased for a moment as he came in, went on again as he crossed the hall in between the long tables at which sat a large collection of undergraduates, with here and there little groups of girls from Somerville and Maggie Hall, all with paper and pens in readiness for this important lecture. Here and there, where there had come only one girl from a ladies' college, there was a woman who in place of pens and paper was armed with knitting needles. She worked on industriously, did this chaperon, paying not the slightest heed to the surrounding undergraduates, setting them indeed a high example of concentration and diligence—an example which, needless to say, passed unnoticed.

Jack slipped on his tattered gown—it was with him a point of honour to have the most disreputable gown in the whole university—and took his

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place beside the girl. He glanced round to see if there were his usual friends and acquaintances, and saw with a start of surprise that the girl next him was pretty beyond belief. "By Jove!" he thought. "This is the first time I've seen a decent looking girl at a lecture. Wonder who she is and where she comes from?" He turned a carefully careless eye on her note-book and saw, "P. D., Somerville."

The lecturer came in. The conversation died down as he walked up to the rostrum and arranged his notes. Jack reached out for the ink and knocked one of the girl's books on to the floor with a crash.

"I beg your pardon," he murmured, stooping to pick it up. It had fallen open, as he had hoped, at the flyleaf. Her name was Peggy Dyson. Jack handed it to her silently.

"Thanks, very much," she said, taking it.

"We—er, are dealing with——" the professor's voice boomed down the hall from his rostrum at the other end. Pens scratched here and there, and pages were turned over, and in the pauses when the learned lecturer examined his notes, the clash of the chaperon's knitting needles faintly pierced the silence, which was also punctuated by the coughings and clearings of throats and restless movements of the bored listeners. Jack's wrist began to ache. He glanced up at the girl next to him and saw that she was gazing into the fire with a tired expression on her face. He thought hard for a moment. Her hair was topping and

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the hat just right. Peggy wasn't such a bad name after all.

"Isn't this frightfully boring?" he whispered.

The girl gave a little movement of surprise, looked at him, became uneasy, and looked away again.

"Yes, awful," she ~~replied~~, dipping her pen into the ink.

The lecturer was still monotonously lecturing. Opposite Jack was a man drawing faces—obvious caricatures of the Regius Professor. Some men were even reading the "Isis" for relief. Jack turned to the girl again.

"She's much more fun than this beastly rot," he thought.

"Why not?" thought Miss Peggy. "He's rather a nice looking boy. I don't see why I shouldn't talk to him. And this *is* so dull."

Jack caught her eye. "The old boy sounds exactly like a bumble-bee," he whispered. "Don't you think so?"

The girl gave a little silent chuckle. "He reminds me of our vicar at home," she replied. "They're both awful old bores."

"Oh, bad luck," said Jack. "We've got rather a decent old sort at our place. I say—er—are you at Somerville?"

The girl smiled. "That's too obvious," she said. "Try it more tactfully."

"Well," said Jack, with a grin, "I'm certain you are because I saw your name in your book when I knocked it down."

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"Oh!" said Peggy stiffening, "I think we'd better take some more notes." She dipped her pen and went on writing.

"Dash it! now she's annoyed," thought Jack, glancing round to see if anyone was taking any notice of them. At the other end of the table he saw a man with his head down on his hands sleeping peacefully with a beatific smile. Next to him was a person with a high forehead, spectacles and long hair, who was writing assiduously—"Obviously a Balliol scholar from the look of him," thought Jack.

"I say," he said to the girl, "I hope you don't mind my knowing your name, Miss Dyson?"

"I don't think it's quite fair," said Peggy, keeping her eyes on her note-book. "I don't know *yours*."

"Oh, mine's Jack—Jack Felthropp," he said, pushing forward his book. "That's my college."

"Thank you," said Peggy. "Now we're all square."

"Do you play golf?" asked Jack, catching at the phrase.

"Yes, a bit," said Peggy. "Do you?"

"Rather!" said Jack, "I've just managed to bring my handicap down to eight."

"That's rather good," said Peggy. "I can't get below twelve."

"Where do you play?" asked Jack.

"Oh—at home," answered the girl evasively.

"But I mean do you play here?" asked Jack.

"Sometimes. Not very often," answered Peggy.

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"Look here, will you come and have a game at Radley sometime?" Jack was getting keen.

"Oh, I couldn't possibly," said Peggy firmly. "I don't know you. I've never been introduced."

"Oh, lord!" said Jack; "does that matter?"

"Most certainly; what would people say?"

"Oh, hang people! I say *do* come."

The Regius Professor was winding up. In the stereotyped phrases of the University lecturer he announced that next time he would deal at length with the next link in the important chain. Pens stopped scratching. The sleeper woke with a jump. The obviously Balliol man carefully blotted his notes and gathered them reverently up. The knitting-needles were silent. The lecturer walked out and the general exodus followed him.

Peggy rose and gathered up her books.

"I say, you *must* come, Miss Dyson. Will you?"

"Well, I don't think I ought."

"I'm all against what people say, and we could have a topping game. It would be simply priceless of you if you would come. To-morrow at two. Will you?" Jack pleaded as if he were already in the Middle Temple.

"Very well," said Peggy, hurrying away.

Jack breathed a sigh of satisfaction. "Not a bad lecture," he said.

CHAPTER VI.

A REGIUS PROFESSOR.

(Speculations inspired by attendance at an Inaugural Lecture.)

A REGIUS PROFESSOR is that curious creature who is born old, who is a constant source of worry and anxiety to his mother because it is impossible to compel, cajole, or induce him to go out of doors and "play at ball" with his "little playmates." To her annoyance and fright he persists in mooning about indoors by himself, is shy when visitors come, and refuses to be shown off like his little brothers and sisters. When he arrives at that difficult age when it is necessary to promote him to Eton collars and long trousers, he endures agonies of shame. Unlike the ordinary boy who swaggers abroad peacock-like, full of the wonderful importance of self, and who, on being chaffed gives back as good as he gets, and is even prepared to fight for the honour of his first pair of trousers, the Regius Professor lurks in secret places and avoids, as much as the grown-ups will allow, contact with his kind. Far from courting notice of his relations and acquaintances, he shuns it, shrinking clam-like at the first look or word of

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chaff into his shell and seeks comfort in the glorious world of literature. He has an ever present dread of being laughed at or even noticed, and is thus driven against his will to live lonely and dissatisfied with the scheme of things. He looks longingly at other boys and girls from behind a terrible barrier of shyness over which he dare not try to climb. At school his loneliness is continued, for he does not make friends. Boys who are good at work and nothing else are never popular, for although games may be compulsory, he never does well at them. At the crucial moment his imagination conjures up a lurid picture of everyone watching him, expecting him to fail, with a sneer all ready, and—he fails. He is lucky if there is a master with imagination, perception, and understanding, who can spare the time to pierce his shell and find the human boy in him. His letters home differ from those of his brothers. His mother, reading them, prays that he is not unhappy, and is only half comforted and reassured when the terminal report comes in showing full marks for diligence, conduct, and attendance against his name.

In the holidays when an invitation to a party comes for him and his brothers, he looks at it with hatred and gladness—hatred because he dreads the thought of a party with all its games and formalities, gladness because he longs to go and laugh and chatter and be normal and enjoy himself, and again hatred because he knows he will not be able to. The mere thought of dancing

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causes him to break out into a cold sweat, while the suggestion of choosing a partner makes him clench his hands, and, fighting back his tears, ask himself why he was born so. The rank injustice of the whole thing overwhelms him. All the other boys and girls can welcome an invitation to a party and enjoy themselves to the full. Why can't he? Why must he force himself against his will to go, knowing full well that if he stays away he will be sorry, and yet dreading the affair?

To a certain extent he gets to hate his brothers and sisters, even his father and mother, because he is afraid to do things before them. He dare not sing in front of his mother much as he would like to; he cannot even confide his little secrets to her, he is afraid of her not understanding. If someone else's mother is sympathetic his emotion breaks all barriers, and he tells her everything from the beginning. He might, perhaps, be able to do things in the presence of strangers, to sing or even dance, but with his own people there it is impossible, and at that age he never goes anywhere without them.

Even at this age his opinion of girls is distorted, unique. He looks upon them from afar with awe, admiration, delight. It is a constant wonder to him how anyone can talk casually with any girl to whom he is introduced, how he can even be introduced without turning a hair, while he himself trembles at the approaching swish of

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petticoats. To him they are creatures apart, to be worshipped, treated with humility and reverence, their least whim to be gratified on the instant, a smile and a "thank you" to be stored away in the heart and brought out for comfort in bad hours.

And so with this uneasy temperament he is sent up in due course to Oxford, friendless, save for the heroes and queens he had discovered for himself in his endless literary explorations, but preceded by an unpleasant reputation for brain and studiousness. Oxford, or a certain section of it, folds him in a warm embrace. The Balliol scholar invites him to meals, and there, after the first self-consciousness has worn off, he discovers the consolation afforded by many pipes and much talk. For a time this not merely satisfies him, but satiates his being, makes life worth the living. Then at last he sickens of this over-rich diet and becomes big with the desire for action, movement, muscular endeavour. He tries, who shall say how hard, to enlist in the ranks of the bicepped army of athletes, only to find himself doomed to failure and bitter introspection. He passes through a terrible period of self-recrimination, of inveighings against fate, and would gladly barter away his brains and scholastic attainments could he only become as the others are, mere human beings, optimistic, normal, and pulsating with high spirits. This phase passes, and he is beaten back to seek solace in his books and Balliol talk, resigning himself bitterly to his

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abnormal and hermit-like temperament. For very spite he strives after scholastic honours, and so it comes about that instead of getting his Blue for rowing, or boxing, or any other of the athletic things, he gets it in the schools, emerging with an alpha on every paper and a brilliant first.

It is at this period of his introspective existence, when he is resting awhile after the heavy toil of examinations, that there enters unto him the inevitable woman. Like a ray of sunshine, she lights up his life, and his whole being is warmed and gladdened. In her presence he is tonguetied, gauche, a very sot. But afterwards in the privacy of his own den, surrounded by his pipes, and books, and pictures, his tongue is loosened and he pours out his soul in raptures. He does not love in the manner of ordinary mortals, who are merely filled with self-complacence and who, at will, can steer their affections this way and that. For him there is but one woman in the world for ever and ever. His work is forgotten. His whole mind is centred on one thought—the woman. He wakes in the morning murmuring her name. Her face is before his eyes throughout the day. He cannot frame two consecutive sentences when in her company, and afterwards, for fear of being laughed at, tears up the letter he dare not send.

Then one day he hears that she is to marry someone else and, cruellest thing of all, receives an invitation to her wedding.

He recovers from the blow slowly, with

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difficulty. He sends her the most expensive present that he can afford, and turns eagerly to his work once more. In this at least he does not fail. His nomination to the Regius Professorship of his particular subject follows inevitably, a preordained thing, and on a certain day, at the appointed hour he wraps his gown around him, and goes forth to deliver his inaugural lecture.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GENTLE ART OF RAGGING.

THE Year Club dinner was over. The once beautifully laid and decorated dinner-table, with its vases of flowers and coloured menus, looked as if a small cyclone had stopped in passing. The men swarmed out into the quad—someone was still thumping the piano—leaving the wine-stained cloth littered with broken glasses and empty flower vases, remains of fruit and dirty plates, to be removed by the scouts. The blue-grey haze of cigar and cigarette smoke floated out of the open door of the lecture room, where the feast had been held, into the quad. The stillness and restfulness of the cold, dry night air was dispersed by the rushings and yellings of wild forms in evening clothes. To distinguish who they were was impossible in the darkness of the late evening.

A little group finally came to temporary rest under a lighted window, and one could make out the burly form of the president of the year, a gigantic rugger blue, the stroke of the eight, a harum scarum little person very much out of training, two or three of the college eleven, and several other rowing men, with their arms round

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each other's necks. Ordinarily these men never took much notice of one another beyond a nod in passing, but—one touch of *Veuve Clicquot* makes the whole world kin, and their love for each other was now passing deep and demonstrative.

Stroke slid an arm round the president's waist and snatched the cigar from his mouth. "I shall refuse to marry you, sweetheart," he said, puffing at the stolen cigar, "if you smoke weeds in that unladylike manner."

The president tackled him. "Give it here, you brute." He laid stroke on his back, and resumed possession.

"Oh, darling, you've hurt me," cried stroke. "Help me up, you elephant. You've cooked my dinner coat, confound you."

"Rats!" replied the president. "You shouldn't have pinched my weed. Look here, though, I'm feeling merry and bright, let's go and visit someone."

"Right," said stroke, leaping up. "Who shall we honour?"

"How about that clumsy brute who put his foot through the boat?" suggested one of the eight.

"No," said stroke quickly. "He's all right. Besides, he was a guest."

"I know!" cried one of the eleven. "What are the names of those two freshers with hirsute appendages on the upper lip? They're awful rotters, and they don't play soccer, or row, or anything."

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The rest yelled with delight.

"Where do they live?"

"T'other quad somewhere."

"Next staircase to mine. *I know.*"

"*Come on.*"

They all linked arms and swept with a prolonged shriek across the quad, and barged into a very small don at the gateway leading into the further quad.

"Steady, steady, go easy," cried the don, struggling to keep on his feet.

Still yelling, they broke round him like foam, and, linking up the other side, tore along again.

"Here we are!"

"Is this it?"

"Yes, up here. Second landing."

Tumbling over each other's heels in the dark narrow staircase, they crashed up like an army storming a castle, or a horse kicking out in his loose box, and burst panting all in a heap into the fresher's bedder.

"Easy all! Back her down," cried stroke, upsetting the bed.

"Collar him low," yelled the president, sprinkling the chest of drawers all over the room.

"Here they are!" screamed voices from the sitter. "Come on in!"

"Come on, stroke, you worm! Give her ten," cried the President, smashing the electric bulb and barking his shins against the leg of the bed. "Ow!" he swore loudly.

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They both adjourned into the sitter.

"Order, order!" called the President to the men who were rumpling the freshers with zest. They desisted.

"Gentlemen!" said the president thickly.

"Chair, chair!" yelled the rest, pushing the two men into their seats.

"I should jush like t'say," continued the president, winking solemnly at stroke, "that we all grea' friendsh of yoursh. We love you like shishtersh, but the hair on your upper lipsh pains us very mush. The question before the house is, lesh have 'em off at onsh."

The two freshers looked at each other nervously. They gathered that these men were very drunk, and meant to shave off their moustaches. They moved back to back and waited without a word.

"Have you anyshing to shay?" asked the president, lurching unsteadily.

"We've got some coffee and cigarettes if you'd like that," said one of the freshers soothingly.

"Hesh trying to bribe you, Willy, darling," laughed stroke. "And he look'sh as if he'll hit you if you aren't polite."

The president smiled all over his face and zigzagged across the room towards the two men. The crowd shrieked with laughter and closed in. Before the two could hit, gentle arms had them round the neck and waist, others caught hold of them by the arms and legs, and in a second they were held down in two chairs by a laughing crowd of apparently drunken men

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stroke sat down on one of them and stroked the man's moustache softly.

"What a shweet lil thing," he said. "Sho shoft and downy."

Both the freshers started struggling. "Get out of here. We haven't done you any harm. Why the devil can't you leave us alone, you drunken swine!" They kicked and fought.

"They fight! They fight! Oh, what boldness and unkindness when we love 'em sho mush. Ow! hold 'em." Stroke raked in a drawer and found some cord. Hastily cutting it in half, he tossed a bit to the president, and in spite of furious struggles the two freshers were soon tied securely to chairs.

The president found the cigarettes and tossed one to each man. "I've squashed my dresh collar. Shomeone pour out the coffee." He sat down on the table and upset all the matches before he lighted his cigarette.

The crowd spread and set to work loudly. The sideboard was burst open and cups and saucers brought out. Some port was found with a yell of joy by one man, and they all performed a cancan of triumph round the two prisoners. The room soon filled with smoke; books were lying all over the room, photographs and pictures fell in layers, the president was upset off the table, chairs fell, and glasses and the bottle of port were broken after they had emptied it and drunk all the coffee.

"To work, to work!" yelled the president.

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"Shomeone find hish razors," cried stroke.

Half a dozen men promptly tore into the bedder and returned with a razor, shaving pot, and cold water.

Stroke seized the razor. "Now then, dearsh," he said. "Sit quite shtill and I'll shave you nishely."

None too carefully the president lathered one side of each man's upper lip, and stroke took it off with the razor, leaving the other side intact.

The freshers swore and called them beasts, but the deed was done.

"Hurrah! Give 'em shome cigarettesh."

A lighted cigarette was put into each man's mouth so that they could at least smoke, until they either succeeded in breaking free or were found by someone and released. The crowd tore downstairs and rushed off to visit someone else.

"It's nearly twelve," said stroke. "I'm off to my digs. I believe those chaps thought we were really drunk."

"There was a certain amount of crude merit about our imitation of it," said the president. "I'm off to roost too. 'Night."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TORPIDS.

THE second division was just over. A feeble sun did its best to cheer up the gasping, dead-beat men who sucked lemons or lay back full length on their seats beyond the winning-post in a confused crush of eights, while a gaping crowd of townees watched from the tow-path. The undergraduate and the others of his crew were standing on the barge, watching too, with a pseudo-professional eye—that is, some of them were, for the rest had long ago been overcome by frightful attacks of “needle,” and were sitting about dejectedly in corners, limp, and white behind the ears. Their turn was still to come, and, although they knew that they had the pace of the boat in front of them, yet in the bottom of their hearts was an awful fear—some idiot might catch a crab at the start, or a rigger might break, or perhaps the boat behind was better than they knew. How appalling if they were to be bumped ! Stifle the thought quick. Do something. Good work ! Here comes the captain.

“Now then, boys,” he cried cheerily—they tried not to notice his nervous excitement—“tumble

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in. Time to get down to the start. Bow! . . .
Where's that ass bow?"

"All right," growled bow, slipping out of a huge overcoat and going on to the raft. Silently they "tumbled" in. The rest of the college made a background of quiet, nervous faces. It was an anxious moment. The college was at stake.

"Now, I'm not coming down to the start," said the captain. "Hawkings will see to you there. I'm going on the Greener. You'll catch them in the Gut—or you ought to. Cox, give 'em two bits of ten strokes. And as many starts as you like, stroke."

The boatman shoved their nose out. "Paddle on, bow!" cried cox.

"Now then, boys," added the captain, "remember all of you, right off the stretcher, and drive her with your legs. No arms at all, all legs and body, and when you do give her ten, give 'em altogether like the devil."

"Four bow oars!" yelled cox, and they slowly moved out into mid-stream. "Pick it up all," from cox, and the barge burst into yells. "Well rowed, boys! well rowed!" Rattles were clacked and trumpets blown, and cox's yells were rendered abortive by the pandemonium. Brrr! It was cold. Feeling a little more happy now that the oars were actually in their hands, and the boat driving under them, they paddled down past the line of barges packed with people, who stared at them to see what crew they were.

"Easy all!" cried cox. "Hold her!"

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They were by the boathouse, with a fairly clear stretch down the Greener in front of them. Hawkins, in shorts on the bank, was running down with them, armed to the teeth with a huge pistol and a megaphone. "Now, boys," he yelled, "quarter of a minute here. Watch the time, all of you."

"Sit her level!" roared cox.

"Forward!" cried Hawkins. "Ready. Row!"

They drove her hard, and at cox's yell eased, panting, on the fifteenth stroke. "Bow, you were late, for the first three strokes," cried Hawkins. "Stroke, lengthen it out a bit. Take her on, cox."

Cox took them on, and they paddled down to the start, where the red-haired boatman was waiting for them in the starting punt moored to the bank. Several of the other crews were already there, and they mutually eyed each other with a violent return of "needle." There was, however, a crowd of their own men at the start, and they did their best to keep up their peckers by a running fire of jokes and scornful comments about the boats behind and in front.

Bang!

"Five minutes' gun," said Hawkins. "Don't take your sweaters off yet," he added, as some of them began to strip.

"Now, gentlemen, please," came a voice. "Just a moment, please."

It was the beastly photographer, high up on a ladder, like a monkey, with an enormous camera.

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Trying hard to look as if they liked it, they all watched the cap, hypnotised. Flick! It was all over. Hills and Saunders would have them on view the following day.

Bang!

"The minute gun. Now then, boys, sweaters off."

The waterman collected the sweaters as they were passed along down the boat or tossed into the punt.

"Paddle on, bow, sir, please."

Bow paddled and their nose pointed up stream. Cox took hold of the bung in a cold, shaking left hand.

"Ten seconds more," said Hawkins eyeing his watch. "Row like hell, boys!"

The red-haired waterman had his boat-hook on stroke's rigger ready to shove. Hawkins counted, they all forward, waiting. "Seven—six—five—four—three—two—bang!"

"One, two, three—swing out. That's better. Now she's *moving*!"

"Keep it long, *long*! Well rowed, boys!" The men on the bank were all yelling different things at once, but between the rhythmic click of the oars in the rowlocks Hawkins's voice came out distinctly from the megaphone. As the crew finished each stroke, cox's face, distorted, red, and with moving mouth at the end of a little lane in between the necks of the crew could be seen. Not a word could be heard. The pistols, rattles, and yells from the bank rendered his words void

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of effect. Behind the undergraduate, Two was groaning raucously with every stroke, and in front his eyes were caught and held by the movement of a mole on Four's neck. Blind to everything else, pulling with all the strength of his body absolutely mechanically, that mole, swinging forward and backward regularly, amused him intensely. He could have roared with laughter at it had he been able.

Two quick shots from Hawkins, and the extra roughness of the water as they neared the boat in front, put just that extra life into them that was essential. Two shots! Only half a length!

The crowd on the bank, racing along, jostling each other, mad with excitement, splashing through puddles and getting muddied to the neck, took to yelling, "Up, up, up!" in one voice. They had passed the Free Ferry, and were nearing the Water Stone. Three shots were fired in quick succession, and stroke "picked her up." They were all ready for it, and, moving as one man, drove her through until they felt like bursting, or dying from exhaustion. Three shots—they were overlapping. Cox was blowing a whistle like a maniac. After what seemed an eternity, but which really was about twenty seconds, the yells turned into vast roars of cheering. The stern oars stopped rowing and doubled up over their stretchers, gasping, steaming hot, and wet through by the splashing. The bow oars rowed on blindly for two or three strokes, until they became aware that the cox of the boat in front

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was pouring out strange words in his endeavours to make them "easy." Then they, too, collapsed as the boats behind shot past in mid-stream. They had made a bump! The men on the tow-path and on the Greener were cheering themselves hoarse, and firing their pistols into the air, while they, worn out but very joyful, bit heavily on slices of lemon, and tried to recover. Was it worth it? Aye, a hundred times!

CHAPTER IX.

THE PRELIMINARY BOXING.

THE momentous day of the competition dawned. The undergraduate awoke from an uneasy night's rest, and slipping into a sweater and a pair of grey "bags," made his way to the gym., to be weighed in. At the top of Alfred Street a figure in an overcoat, from beneath which peeped rainbow-coloured pyjamas, shuffled along in a pair of list slippers, and it was the captain who joined him. The dressing-room of the gym. was crowded with competitors in various conditions of undress, while the sergeant stood near the scales waiting for the captain. On their arrival everybody slipped out of his remaining garments, and one after another they sat in birthday clothes and a nervous smile, while the sergeant read off the weights. Some of the men were several ounces overweight, but to his horror and fright, the scales persisted in maintaining that the undergraduate exceeded the regulation weight by one pound and a half.

"That's all right," said the captain.

"Shall I get rid of it on the punching ball?" said he.

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"That's near enough."

Relieved of anxiety by this kindly assurance on the part of the wearer of pyjamas, the undergraduate covered himself again and prepared to return to college. The sergeant drew him gently but firmly aside. "At eleven o'clock," he said, with the tone of authority assumed by his kind, "you come down here, and I'll rub you over with Elliman's."

"Right," said the undergraduate.

"Now," continued the sergeant, "go and make a 'earty meal, and don't tire yourself."

"Right," said he again, and thereupon hurried away. The breakfast he eat was a monumental one, and, acting on the sergeant's advice about not tiring himself, he cut all lectures, and made a gentle, unhurried tour of the town. The tobacconist's in the High drew him like a magnet. "I'll indulge in a weed or two," he said to himself. "If I get beaten they'll console me. But if I win—well, how can I celebrate the event better?" The cigars were duly bought, and, odd as it may seem from the lateness of the term, paid for.

Eleven found the undergraduate at the door of the gym. again, and, five minutes later, stretched out on a table like a patient for appendicitis, he was rubbed muscle by muscle, by the hard and untiring sergeant.

"Have you seen the draw?" he asked him during the process.

"Yes. You open the ball with H'evans," said the sergeant.

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"Evans! Is he any good?"

"Absolute rabbit!" said the sergeant, turning him over. "But tall and plucky. But you needn't worry about 'im. You're going to win alright, but you'll 'ave to watch Johnson. He 'as a hawkward right hook, but I've told you what to do for that. . . . There you are. Now stand up."

The undergraduate stood and faced him, and the sergeant, clenching his fists, punched him softly—for him—on the abdominal muscles for a minute or two.

"That's all right. Feelin' fit?" he asked.

"Great!"

"Been to the doctor's?"

"No. I'm just going there now. Poof! Doesn't this stuff smell?"

"Very sweet and 'ealthy," said the sergeant. "Now 'ave a light meal about six o'clock, and turn up 'ere to-night about a quarter to eight."

For the third time that morning the undergraduate dressed. The doctor's place was in the Broad, so he dodged down the Turl, crowded with men in gowns going to and coming from lectures, and rang his bell. The doctor punched him and listened through a horn-shaped thing to his internal workings, and told him that he was fit for anything.

"I could have told you that," said he. "However, thank you. Good morning."

At one o'clock the undergraduate returned to college. The lodge was, as usual, crowded.

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Several men, soccer and rugger players, came up and asked if it were true that he was in for the prelim. "Hope you'll pull it," said they when he reluctantly confessed that he was.

A hand was put on his shoulder. He turned and saw a stranger.

"You're the light-weight man?" he said. "My name's Clinch. Evans has scratched, and the captain wants you to spar a bye with me."

"With a name like that?" said the undergraduate. "Is it safe?"

The man smiled. "Oh, I think so."

"All right," he agreed. "But look here, don't you hit too hard."

Clinch laughed. "I'm thinking about myself," he said. "I don't want to get killed. . . . See you to-night then," and off he went.

Up to this moment the undergraduate had been as cheery as a sand-boy, but, after a solitary lunch, a feeling of awful depression enveloped him like a fog. Sitting still was impossible. He tried a book—no use. The "needle" had him in its grip, and he began seriously to think of drowning himself, or running away, or, good idea, scratching his name from the competition. "This is appalling," he thought. "I'm getting into a state of blue funk," and snatching up a cap, made a dash for a friend's room. Heaven was kind—he was in, and for the rest of the afternoon they sat and talked and played the piano. Like a sportsman he realised the undergraduate's trouble, and entered into the spirit of the thing. He was

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saved. He did *not* scratch, and began to feel almost happy again. But when six o'clock came, and he returned to his own room to make a light meal, he was again trembling with "needle."

A quarter to eight came at last. What the undergraduate had done in the interval still remains a mystery to him, but to his surprise he found himself at the door of the gym. at the precise moment. The sergeant was busily taking money at the door. The place was already crowded with undergraduates and townees, and a blue haze of tobacco-smoke hung like a vast cloud over the ring. The undergraduate pushed his way through, explaining to the policeman at the door, who saw that he had not taken a ticket, that he was a competitor. He was let in, and, pale and nervous, went round to the dressing-room. The others were all there, limp and frightened, in corners. The captain, who was not boxing, was full of sparkling witticisms, but they all seemed very flat at the time.

He was told, while struggling blasphemously with the knot of his boxing boots, that Evans had not scratched after all. At that moment the man came up, dressed, with an overcoat over his shoulders. He had a green, sickly grin on his face. "We—er—begin the thing, don't we?" he said.

The undergraduate's heart stopped beating for a moment as he looked at him. He had never seen the man before, and he seemed about four

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feet taller than the undergraduate. "Yes," he whispered, looking away quickly.

The sergeant hustled in. "Now then, out you come," he said. He tied on the undergraduate's gloves and led him out. Evans followed. He climbed through the ropes, the crowd clapping a little, and sat down on the far chair, cold and thoroughly rotten.

Time was called, and they shook hands.

The "needle" left him. "Thank Heaven," he thought. "I'm right again," and he punched his hardest at his opponent's face. By the middle of the second round Evans had been counted in three times and was all to bits. The referee jumped in suddenly and stopped the fight. The undergraduate was declared the winner. Feeling very fat as to the mouth and puffy as to the left eye, he shook hands with Evans and retired to the dressing-room in a chaos of hope, excitement, and renewed funk. There were two more fights to come! The sergeant washed him down, and sticking on an overcoat, he sank on to a chair in a far corner not daring to watch the other fights.

Loud applause rang out at regular intervals after what seemed an eternity of heavy-sounding punches. Men came in bleeding and groggy, or light-footed and smiling, as they lost or won. Then the semi-final of the Lights was called. Again the undergraduate won, and returned to his chair through a burst of applause and comment from the crowd, covered with blood and very tired. Another sickening wait and the final

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arrived. It was the last contest of the evening. The man Johnson was his opponent this time. He had won his first heat and then sparred a bye. He looked fresh and uninjured.

"Now for it," thought the undergraduate.

"Time!"

They shook hands and circled for an opening. Bang! The undergraduate's poor old optic caught it full. "Watch it," thought he. Johnson led at his face again, but, slipping the blow, the undergraduate planted him full on the nose, bringing him short up and followed with his right on his body. A series of heavy punching followed and time was called. The sergeant sponged and fanned him, talking hard the while. "You're level on that round," he said, "keep on leading and use your right more. Follow him up. Worry him."

"Seconds out of the ring—Time."

The second round was better. They both got home several times. But when time was again called the undergraduate thought the other was weakening, while he still felt hefty. More sponging and towelling. "You've got to kill 'im now," said the sergeant, "or you won't win. Kill 'im, I tell you, sir."

Time was called on the last round, and they shook hands with a smile. They were both canny for a bit, but at last the undergraduate saw an opening, and got him on the point of his jaw, retiring to his corner while Johnson was counted in. He got up on the eighth second, but the

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undergraduate was out for glory, and never let him rest. "Time!"

They staggered to their corners and the undergraduate's name was called as the winner.

Very choky, but wonderfully relieved, he went across and shook hands. The crowd yelled and clapped, and made for the exit. He fell somehow off the platform and into the dressing-room, worn out and madly happy.

The preliminary competition was over. Oh, those cigars!

CHAPTER X.

THE LAST SUNDAY OF TERM.

THE scout cleared away the remains of lunch. Various untouched bits of chicken were allotted in his mind to the various members of his family. The sweets were also mentally divided up, though to all seeming he was intent on nothing but getting the place cleared as quickly and quietly as possible. The sofa was pulled up in front of the fireplace and an arm-chair was posted at each corner. On the sofa were two huge pipes behind which their owners, legs stretched out, lay in attitudes of great and well-filled peace. Each arm-chair also was duly filled with a restful form, who emitted smoke with a like zest. A little stool-table between the arm-chair on the left of the fireplace and the sofa supported a large blue tobacco jar, on which glared the college arms. A box of club matches and a bundle of pipe cleaners kept it company. The scout put the last of the salt cellars in the cupboard, and opening the door over which hung a curtain to keep out the draught, carried the tray into the scout-hole and coming back, softly shut the door again. The room, overlooking the Giler, faced the "Puseum."

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It was furnished with the usual sofa, table, and arm-chairs, but the character of its owner was revealed by the pictures and small ornaments. From the large "doubles" on the walls it was clear that he rowed. If further proof were needed there was an oar over them. On the mantel-piece were the usual family photographs, but between them and stuck in the sides of the looking-glass were many signed picture postcards of footlight favourites. On the sideboard, in addition to many menus with pendant pencils and coloured ribbons, were several dance cards.

The stillness was broken by a deep sigh from the sofa.

"I say," said a sleepy voice. "This is the last Sunday of term."

"You don't say! Gee, how bright some of you are!" The tall American turned over and looked at him with a smile.

"I've only done one North Oxford tea this term." The owner of the sleepy voice, and incidentally of the room, was Jack Felthropp. The three other men were of the same college, so that they appreciated to the full his sad remark about the teas.

"I suppose I shall have to walk out there this afternoon too. What a beastly bore!" said the light-haired man in the right-hand arm-chair. He was stroking a fat fox terrier which lay blinking on his knees. It had been smuggled in from his digs in an overcoat. "I wish there was a taxi going. It's so rotten walking."

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The man in the other arm-chair laughed. "Good for your waistline to walk. That dog is a blessing to you. Don't believe you'd ever get any exercise at all if it weren't for him."

"Now, see here! Don't start in on that argument again," burst out the American anxiously. "Everyone knows that old Crows never takes ekker. He has, or did have a heart, poor darling. Say now, who are you going to tea with, Jack?"

Felthropp roused himself. "Well, I ought to keep at least four if I can squeeze them all in. But I'm all against moving at all."

"Well," said Crows with the terrier, "I simply must keep a tea with the Giggler."

"She's one of my list. We'll go together," said Felthropp.

The left-hand arm-chair spoke again. "These teas are a frightful nuisance. Who on earth wants to go to tea with a don's wife, and be asked every time if you row, or play football? Besides on the whole they're such an uninteresting crowd, and the Giggler is the last word."

"Yes," said Jack. "Dons haven't got much taste, poor devils."

"Em! They get caught. Thank goodness we don't have North Oxford teas on our side. They're a penance that is a specialty to this country."

"Fancy getting caught! My Lord!"

"Well, anyhow, if they can't remember who one is, why do they think we're rude if we don't go?"

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"It's like divvers. It survives from the Middle Ages way back before the Great Wind. Only in those times they probably didn't only have tea!" said the American bitterly.

"How many teas have you men kept?" asked Jack.

"Two."

"One."

"Two."

The answers all came irritably. The room was very comfortable, North Oxford so untempting, and yet such a hideous necessity.

"Well," said Jack, "suppose we all go together and keep four teas. If we give each female don ten minutes we ought to get back in about an hour and a half. We'll start at four, and I'll have a kettle boiling by five thirty, and we'll all have a real tea and a rest after the afternoon's work. What do you say?"

"Right," said the three in one voice.

"Can't we share a taxi?" asked the light-haired man, who answered unwillingly to the name of Crows.

"Aren't any to-day," said Jack, looking out into the Giler.

"I guess the walk will ease things down a bit for the tea," chuckled the man from the other side.

* * * * *

The Giggler, as she was disrespectfully though aptly named by the entire college, put the finish-

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ing touches to the tea-table and placed plates of cakes on to the three compartments of the "Curate's Aid," an elaborate wooden thing fret-worked in oak. She was a short, pasty-faced woman, rather pretty in a sort of way, who dressed in flowing silk blouses, and who tried hard to be very nice to the undergraduates who called. The whole effort, however, was wasted. Her habit of adding a foolish giggle to the end of every remark, jarred on the system and made one long for freedom and open country. The room was crowded with furniture, useless, pretty things that filled every corner and got in one's way. An open grand piano filled one end of the room, and many chairs were cunningly fitted in between the plethora of little tables, book-stands, and flower-holders that choked the place.

Her husband came in, a small, fat, quiet man with a high collar and an ample moustache. "I saw four men coming down the road from my window just now," he said.

"I expect they are the first batch, he, he, he," simpered the Giggler. "I've noticed that although lots of men come here," she went on, "they never stay very long, he, he, he. Except the shy ones. Why is it, he, he?"

Her husband, strangely enough, though very fortunately, was very much in love with his wife, so he did not make the obvious reply. Instead he said with a reminiscent smile, "Well, in my day, we used sometimes to be rather behind in keeping don's teas, and so on the last Sunday of term

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made a point of doing four or five, one after the other."

"Oh, how clever of you, dear, he, he, he! Here they come!" The gate creaked like a soul in pain. Heavy footsteps crunched up the gravel walk and the bell rang. A minute later and the gushing Mrs. Don welcomed Felthropp, Crows, and the other two. Having giggled to each of them, she tripped over to the tea-table and poured out.

The clock struck four.

"Do you all like milk and sugar, he, he, he?"

"Yes, thank you," Crows was nearest to her.

"All boxers like sugar, don't they, he, he, he? You are a boxer, aren't you?"

Crows got rather red as he met the six other eyes. "No, I—er—I don't box," he said. "I take my dog out for walks instead."

"Oh, do you? Then it must be that other straw-coloured hairy man, he, he, he." The Giggler darted a coy glance at him and handed the other cups one by one. "You must look after yourselves, he, he, he."

She drew the American into the bright conversation, while Jack and the fourth talked with her husband.

"Do you come from the north or south of Scotland, he, he, he?" she asked the American.

The tall man hid his deep annoyance. "Noo York is where I come from," he said quietly.

The Giggler giggled. "Oh, I'm so sorry, he, he, he. But I never *can* remember accents, he, he, he."

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Jack watched the clock. At ten minutes past four he laid down his cup and crossed over to the Giggler. "So sorry," he said, "but I'm afraid I must tear myself away."

The others followed his example with relief.

"Must you go? Well, good-bye, he, he, he, and I hope you'll have a nice vacation, he, he, he." She shook hands all round and they filed out.

Her husband helped them into coats in the hall and saw them off.

As they passed through the creaking gate two other men met them.

"Gee whiz! she asked me if I were a tarnation Scotchman," spluttered the American.

The new-comers laughed and passed in. "We've just come from Tupp's," they said.

"You'll get used to it," said Jack. "Now then, let's get old Tupp off our chests. He's nearest."

"Say, how about the Globule?" asked the American, referring affectionately to his favourite among those in authority.

"Oh, he's our last port of call. Then we'll get back and have a real tea, with no fancy small talk, and room to stretch without knocking over little tables and things. Come on."

CHAPTER XI.

THE INTER-'VARSITY BOXING COMPETITION.

THE competition was to take place at Cambridge. The captain, who was going over early in the morning, had told the undergraduate to be at King's Hotel not later than six o'clock in the evening, so he decided to catch a train at about two in the afternoon. In due course he piled his boxing boots, zephyr, shorts, and gloves into a kit bag. This, with the addition of a tooth-brush, pyjamas, and a collar, completed the outfit. It was frightfully cold, so he climbed into a huge overcoat and marched down to the station.

Two pals came down to see him off, and on the platform he met the sergeant, who was coming over to second him. They got into a smoker, and with the cordial wishes of good luck of his two friends ringing in his ears, the train lumbered out of the station. His side of the seat—and they had the carriage to themselves—was piled with literature of various descriptions. The sergeant, who was not a reading man, pulled out an old and privileged briar, filled it with shag, and settled himself comfortably for the four-hour journey. Now to be deprived of tobacco oneself is irritating

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enough, but to see another man through clouds of smoke—and shag at that—is the very last straw. That journey was a nightmare. The magazines palled, the beastly train stopped without any apparent reason at every wayside halt, and it became colder and more ghastly every minute.

By the time they did finally pull into Cambridge the undergraduate was stiff all over, and wishing he'd never been fool enough to agree to box. They got out on to the cold, dingy platform, and misery overwhelmed the undergraduate. He'd never been to Cambridge before, and the streets looked like a slum in his frayed condition of nerves. They boarded a one-horse tram in gloomy silence, and clattered slowly down a long dark street, between pawnshops and places where penny dishes of winkles are sold, vinegar and pepper thrown in, and at last arrived at the hotel. At least it was warm and well lighted, and marching into a dining-room the undergraduate found himself in the middle of the other men. He felt better at seeing faces he knew, and settling down to a square meal, soon lost the feeling of hopelessness. Everyone was rather restrained, and the jokes and laughter were somewhat forced. The Cambridge captain came in and they eyed one another with mutual distrust. After the meal they explored the hotel, found their various rooms, and laid out their kit. Then they sat round and watched the Light Blue undergraduates with surprise and amusement. Although it was only about half-past six, they

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all went about in squares and gowns, and the squares, apparently, had to be broken up before they could be worn. The undergraduate had always thought too, that they could give a few points in the wearing of extra special waistcoats, but these people left them standing still. Oxford men were babies to them in the matter of waistcoats and colour schemes generally, and the undergraduate felt duly humble.

The trainer appeared with a small black bag. He waved this and jerked his thumb upstairs. "Come and 'ave a rub down," he said.

They followed him meekly upstairs and stripped. One by one they stood on a chair, and he poured Elliman's on to them and rubbed away with a hissing noise reminiscent of the stables. Some thoughtful person produced some thick sticking-plaster, and those who had sore thumbs bandaged them up. By this time the great moment had arrived, so they all seized their things and having dressed, made their way round to the Corn Exchange. The place was packed. The whole 'varsity seemed to be there, the undergraduates still in squares and gowns, with pipes stuck out of their mouths, and the townees sitting and standing in the cheaper places like sardines in a tin. In the middle was a high platform, roped in, with a little pile of resin outside the ring. On the left was an alcove screened off, behind which they were to dress. The competition was to begin with the bantams, so the undergraduate and his trainer sat down and watched the fight. Before

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they came on he looked round everywhere to see his opponent. He was a light weight, and couldn't see anyone whose size was a clue. But when he had ticked all the others off in his mind there was only one man left.

"Good Lord!" he thought. "He *can't* be my man?"

The person in question was sitting down in a great coat quite near. From time to time he eyed the undergraduate. His legs seemed to stretch out for miles, and his shoulders looked about two yards wide—a perfect giant.

"Oh, mother!" cried the undergraduate in agony, "bury me decently—what's left of me."

After that the bantam fight scarcely interested him. He was wondering how little David—that's himself—should fight that Goliath. Loud cheers burst forth, and he learnt that the Light Blue bantam had won his spurs.

"Come and change," said his trainer.

The giant had disappeared. They went into the dressing-place behind the screen, and there the undergraduate saw him already changed. He could hardly believe his eyes. He was tall, certainly, but where were the enormous shoulders, the huge girth? The overcoat had done the trick. He was really a thin, wiry man. With an immense sigh of relief, the undergraduate peeled. He felt that he could make two of him in thickness and breadth, so he was again happy, almost merry and bright. Then came loud boos from the loyal crowd, and the Oxford fencing man came back a winner.

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"Your turn now," said the sergeant.

They went forth. Dead silence. Then a burst of applause, and, looking round, he saw the Cambridge man climb into the ropes after him. The rounds were three in number, of three minutes duration. No need to hurry things. Plenty of time to do all that's necessary, and rock him to sleep.

"Seconds out of the ring. . . . Time!"

They shook hands, and the fight began. Every time the undergraduate was hit, which was frequently, loud cheers came from the townees. Their loyalty was most inspiring—to the Light Blue! The referee jumped into the ring between each round and implored them to keep quiet, but without much effect. Every time he hit the Light Blue they remained silent. In the second round the undergraduate tried to put his man out. No luck, he was as hard as nails. In the third the Cambridge man tried the same game, with the same result, and the undergraduate got the verdict on points. The referee announced it, and loud hissings broke out from all parts of the hall, while the undergraduates counteracted this with clappings. When the undergraduate was dressing again after having sponged down, he found that his opponent had broken a chunk off one of his front teeth, and it hurt when cold air struck it. *He* didn't show anything, but confessed to feeling very bruised on the stomach muscles, "Well," thought the undergraduate, "thank Heaven he feels something!"

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The other fights were going on, so they hurried dressing and went out to watch, the crowd cheering themselves hoarse at a victory, and groaning like cows at milking-time when Oxford pulled off an event. At last it was all over. Oxford had won by six events to two, and they all went back to the hotel in a gang to eat, drink, and recover. The dining-room was gorgeously decorated with dark and light blue flowers and streamers, and in front of each place stood a wonderful programme with the Universities' arms at the top and bottom. They sat down in their blazers, each man next to his opponent, and began the meal about half-past ten. The champagne hurt the undergraduate's tooth, but he became stoical and lapped it down notwithstanding. The meal was an enormous success. Speeches began, and those who were at the far end and could not hear very well, put in a cheery "Hear, hear," whenever they thought that a pause might be filled in, to the intense amusement of the rest of the table, who backed them up like sportsmen. Everybody drank everybody else's health at the same time, and the waiters hurried round with more smokes and more fizz, until the chairman, somewhere about midnight, reluctantly adjourned the genial meeting. The undergraduate's opinions of Cambridge were radically altered. He now thought it a ripping place—almost as good as Oxford—and the Light Blues splendid fellows for all their quaintness in wearing gowns at six o'clock in the evening.

CHAPTER XII.

GOING DOWN.

IT was the last day of the term. Needless to say there were no lectures and if there had been it would be even more needless to say that no one would have attended them. The term, a wet dreary affair only brightened by the celebrations of the Fifth and the one or two athletic events which merely serve as a sort of bracer up for the year, had dragged itself to a weeping finish. The rain, however, was unheeded. All the heartfelt outpourings and gnashings of teeth against the wet and mud and filth had long been used up, and the relief and joy of escaping from Oxford for a glorious six weeks made everyone oblivious of this final downpour. In fact they rather liked it as it made the flitting all the more desirable.

The undergraduate, in an immaculate suit with most wonderfully creased trousers and a still more wonderful club tie, hurried out of his rooms and went into the lodge. A crowd of men were passing in and out, most of them with squares and gowns. Scouts scuttled along answering questions about the "Don Rag" over their shoulders, with-

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out stopping. A pile of trunks, boxes, and suit-cases blocked up half the doorway, and a man with his coat collar turned up and his cap pulled down over his eyes, staggered in with a wheelbarrow laden still more with trunks and bags of golf clubs.

The undergraduate stopped him. "You might fetch mine down as soon as you can, will you? I want to catch the eleven three," he said.

"Right, sir," replied the scout, with his most blandly polite, end-of-term, tip-begetting voice.

"I say, Crooks," said the undergraduate, going into the porter's office, "can you lend me a gown?"

"All gone long ago," replied Crooks, hurrying out with a bundle of papers.

The undergraduate wandered out again and caught the next first year man he saw, "I say, will you lend me your gown a minute, I'm just going into hall?"

"All right, only please let me have it back again as I haven't another."

"Righto, thanks." He took it and, slipping it on—he wasn't a scholar so it did not matter that it was split right down the back and had no tails—dodged into hall where the "Don Rag" was in full blast. Seated all along one side of the table were dons, robed and gowned, with the president in the middle. Most of them looked very bored and got as near the fire as possible, consulting a pile of notes from time to time as each of their particular men came up. On the other side of the

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table seated opposite the president and facing the array of dons was the unfortunate man being "ragged."

The undergraduate sat down with the twenty or so other men who were doing the same schools as himself. They all discussed in whispers what sort of a time they would get and how absurd it was to have to be "ragged" at all.

"Hullo," whispered the undergraduate, as the other undergraduate glided in and sat down beside him. "You packed?"

"Yes, I'm catching the eleven three to town."

"So'm I. Come round to the bank after this. I've got to get some "ready" for the beastly scouts. . . . By Jove, I *am* glad to get away from this hole."

"Righto, I've only got about two quid," replied the other undergraduate, "but I've got to draw it out."

"Mr. Felthropp!" called the senior tutor.

The undergraduate snatched a square from the hands of the man next to him, marched to the chair opposite the president and sat down somewhat nervously. He had been trying to make up for the awful weather that term and was a trifle uneasy about his tutor.

"What's yer name?" asked the president, a little man with a wonderful face and keen bright eye.

"Felthropp, sir," said the undergraduate.

"How d'you spell it?"

"F-e-l-t-h-r-o double p."

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The president wielded his pen. "What d'yer want the double p for?" said he. "One p's good enough, isn't it?"

"I—er—I suppose it is," stammered the undergraduate.

"I'm afraid Mr. Felthropp's work has not been very brilliant this term," put in the senior tutor, a short-sighted, round-faced person with a red tie. "He engages in so many outside matters."

"Oh!" said the president. "That's bad. What d'yer do it for?" He looked hard at the undergraduate. "You've got a fairly intelligent face," he said. "Why don't you live up to it?"

The undergraduate fidgeted with the tassel of his square and said nothing.

"When are you going down?" asked the president.

"This morning, sir."

"This morning, are yer? All right, only see that you don't waste your time next term."

The undergraduate hurried away with a sigh of relief. He shot a wink at the grinning face of the other undergraduate who had been listening much amused. "I'll wait for you," he said, "in the lodge."

The other undergraduate's turn came next, however, and by the time the first year man had claimed his gown from the undergraduate who had quite forgotten from whom he had borrowed it, he was ready. They pushed their way through the crowded lodge and out into the street.

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"Cab, sir! Cab, sir!" Half a dozen whips were raised from the rank, only to drop and watch for the next possible fare as the two men walked arm in arm, busily discussing the prospects of the vac. They turned down the Turl. At Exeter and Jesus, men went quickly in and out. Cabs drove away loaded with luggage, bicycles, golf bags, hockey sticks, and all the paraphernalia with which a scout struggled until the cab went. Then his hand was raised to his mouth, a pause and a quick wrist movement followed while he breathed on it for luck, and the clink of coin was heard when the hand fell naturally down to his pocket.

The two men came out into the High and crossed over to the Bank, whose swing door was in perpetual motion. A constant stream flowed in and struggled at the cashier's desk. Outside were several shabby, unshaven, cold-looking men down at heel and furtive of eye. As each man came out they sidled up. "Wish you luck, sir, Christmas Vac., sir." A policeman strolled into the horizon, and when the two men came out they had disappeared.

"I say," said the other undergraduate, looking up at Carfax clock. "We haven't got too much time. I'm all against missing that eleven train."

"Let's cab it," said the undergraduate.

They raised half a finger and got into a ready cab, which rushed them to college with a good twenty minutes left for the station.

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"Put our luggage on that cab," said the undergraduate as they went through the lodge.

"I left my bowler and stick in your room," said the other undergraduate, "so I've only got to tip Charles. Hope's he's hanging round."

"No need for that," said the undergraduate. "I know Charles. He'll be there all right."

They ran up the staircase. Charles met them at the top—quite by accident. "Going, gentlemen?" he asked casually.

"Yes."

He helped them into their coats. "Hope you'll 'ave a good Vacation," he said, standing carefully in the doorway.

The two men felt in their pockets.

"Thank you, sir, thank you, sir," said Charles, skipping aside. "Good-bye, gentlemen," he added as they hurried through to the cab.

More money was administered to the wheelbarrow man and the lodge sub-porter, who put a careful arm near the cab-wheel to keep their coats from being muddled. They were rattled past Worcester, over the bridge, up the station hill, and arrived with five minutes to spare. The queue at the booking office was about three yards long, but at last they got tickets. Porters hauled trunks up and down, the bookstall clerk sweated blood, paper boys and refreshment sellers tore up and down yelling themselves hoarse as the train panted in and stopped with a grunt. The luggage was heaved in as the two men climbed into a smoking carriage. Doors were banged, the whistle

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blew, more men rushed through the barrier and leaped in, and with a shriek the train went off.

"Thank the Lord!" sighed the other undergraduate.

"Oh, I don't know," said the undergraduate.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE OXFORD CREW AT HENLEY: A DAY IN TRAINING.

TAP, tap. "Seven o'clock, sir."

The taps and apologetic voice passed from door to door, leaving in their wake the sounds of vague uneasy stirrings and loud and protracted yawning. Within five minutes, however, the full crew, clad only in blanket bags over their pyjamas, a blazer, and a full blue muffler round their necks, were silently shovelling down porridge and cream. The tap and the voice had visited Cox's door, but he, with a sweet smile and a sigh of content, had rolled over, as usual, and gone to sleep again. Not for him the early run, thanks very much, but he would jolly well see that he was down in time to get the first bath. The tow-path was foul and slushy, so, having finished their porridge, the eight sallied out up the little lane towards the bridge, and turned to the left along the Maidenhead road. By the time they had done their walk and sprint, the postman had left the letters, and the noise of Cox's bathing himself reached their ears as they sorted them. It was a cheery noise.

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His voice was full of melody and the joy of living. It was very good to hear.

One by one as they finished dressing they wandered down into the dining-room and studied the papers until breakfast was served.

"What does the *Sporter* say about us, Buggins?" asked Cox. His parting was wonderful.

"Here you are," said Higgins, passing it over. "I've finished with it."

They were all eating by now, but the papers ate with them.

These men, upon whose doings were centred the eyes of the whole civilised world, only concerned themselves with the sporting pages of the day's press, where are duly criticised their own achievements and those of their opponents. The Coach, however, was interested in such men as Balfour, Asquith, and Lloyd George. He lacked the brilliant egotism of his charges. "By Jove," he said suddenly, "Asquith's done it."

The crew raised their heads and glanced questioningly at each other.

"Really?" said Stroke politely, "done what?"

"He's got to resign," explained the Coach.

"Oh, but I thought there was a General Election or something on?" said Three.

The Coach laughed.

"What does Guy say about you to-day?" he said, returning to their depth.

Nine voices started at once to tell him every detail of the expert's criticism.

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"Are we going out at eleven to-day?" asked Four.

"Yes," said the Coach.

"Who's on for a game of pills?"

They left the breakfast-table, having eaten enough between them at this one meal to keep ten unemployed for a week, and strolled into the billiard-room. And they played pills until it was time to change and get out.

In the boathouse each man stood by his thwart.

"Ready," said the boatman, "Lift!"

They lifted her off the rack, four men each side of her, and carefully walked her out on to the raft, Cox protecting her fin and rudder. A small crowd of spectators, with a camera or two, mostly held by fair Henleyites, stood about waiting. Small urchins dodged about between them, gazing at the stalwart oarsmen as they carried the boat down, and calling them affectionately by their names with a broad grin. They turned her broad-side on to the raft, the four outside men skipped underneath, and the boat was lowered gently but with professional quickness and skill into the water. Cox, well wrapped up, remained on the raft while the crew went back for their oars.

"Bow!" croaked Cox.

Bow tumbled in, and, in order, the rest of the crew followed. The boatman shoved her off, and the eight started out for the morning's work, the Coach instructing them from the steam launch.

"Eas—y all!" snapped Cox, and the boat

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glided back to the raft again about an hour or so later.

"Mind your oars, stroke side!" The four stroke oars lifted their blades out as they ran into the raft, and the boatman held her steady.

Running with perspiration, they climbed ashore, and slipping the buttons out of the riggers, took their oars into the boathouse. They then returned, lifted out the boat with one quick action, four men skipped underneath, and they carried her up again and returned her to the rack. Breathing hard, they went into the dressing-room to sponge down. Cox sat and watched them.

"Absolutely damnable bit of work!" growled Six.

"She rolled like the devil," said Cox.

"The last bit wasn't so bad, just before we brought her in."

The Coach came in. "Well rowed, boys," he said. "Quite a good morning's work, but——" and he went on to tell them at some length what had ruined it. The crew listened with keen attention and appreciation, although they did not stop splashing and sponging and towelling.

There was still about half an hour to spare before lunch. This passed quickly enough, and they were soon all seated once more round the dining-table. This time, however, they did not make a Gargantuan meal, as at breakfast, but the lightest of light lunches—there was more work to be done in the afternoon. After lunch some of

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them played billiards and others went for a stroll through the town. They made their way over the bridge, past the Red Lion and the old church, which sit, rival attractions, next door to each other, and studied the windows of the photographer's shop, making sarcastic comments on slight faults of rowing as shown in the photographs which had caught them at some awkward moment. The old town was very quiet, and seemed almost dead after the busy hum of the Regatta Week. After purchasing some light literature at the stationer's shop at the corner they returned to the Leander Club and passed the time quietly until the Coach suggested another outing. So they changed once more and got the boat out again. This time they went to Marsh Lock. There was a strong wind, and the water was very choppy. Turning at the lock, they came under the bridge, and, stripping by Hobbs' boathouse, eased at the end of the course preparatory to rowing over the regatta reach. The Coach instructed them from the steam launch.

"Forward!" cried Cox. "Ready . . . Row!" and away they went down the course. Coach boomed at them from time to time through a megaphone, and they finally eased below Temple Island, deeply thankful to have got it over. Here they turned and took her up to the club.

Work was over for the day, and the spectators slowly dispersed after the last of the boat had disappeared into the boathouse. Then came more spongings and discussions on the afternoon's

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rowing, and they adjourned for half a cup of tea and a biscuit.

Till dinner the eight lounged about and rested, and, for want of anything better, dallied again with the newspapers or magazines, and thanked the Lord that work was an unknown quantity and schools a dim shadow on a far-distant horizon.

Cox sneaked out by himself, and, far away from the rest of the crew, did his best to relish a cigar in the solitude of the Red Lion. The other men had long ago sighed out their last regret at the deprivation of tobacco, and if they thought about it all, looked not back at the last orgie of smoking they had indulged in at Oxford, but forward to the glorious weeds they would get through at the Empire on boat-race night. Dinner was at last served, and again the meal was a gigantic one. They rose from the table feeling heavy with it, and far too gross to do anything except sit about and play bridge or possibly another very gentle game of billiards.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BOAT RACE.

IT had been impossible to obtain seats on a launch and follow the race from the start, so the undergraduate and his pal decided to go down to Mortlake and see the finish. It was greatly annoying, because they would only see from Barnes Bridge, and the row from there is only a matter of about three minutes. It was, however, certain, according to the press critics, that it would be an exciting finish, so they thought it quite worth while to make the uncomfortable journey. One of the Oxford men had taken it into his head to fall ill at the eleventh hour, poor devil, and so it was thought that their chances were more than slight, practically nil, especially when looking to the fact that the other crew's Stroke had already brought them three consecutive wins.

So they boarded a train at Waterloo. They just caught it by the skin of their teeth, and were compelled to stand the whole way. This is never conducive to good temper, and as they already felt rather more than uneasy about their winning, they finally got out at Mortlake with expletives

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ready at the slightest excuse. They were frightfully early—another hour and a half to wait. The passengers surged off the platform and swelled the already crowded streets.

“What shall we do?” asked the friend. “Wander round or get to the beastly river?”

“I think,” said the undergraduate, “that if we want to see anything of this miserable race we had better get down to the river straight away. This mob will fill the barges if we don’t, and we shall be pipped.”

“Well, let’s get something to chew, anyhow.”

So they dodged into a fairly respectable shop and laid in milk chocolate. There was no need to ask the way to the river. The crowd was moving towards it in one long line like a theatre queue. They therefore followed, and in due course saw the river in front of them.

“’Ere y’are, sir! Ferry yer hover, sir! Sixpence the trip!”

“A bob a’ead on the barge! Only a bloomin’ bob, bob a ’ead!” Boatman in once white sweaters vied with dirty bargemen in corduroys and pea jackets, in turning an honest penny on the day. All along the bank lay barges moored, each one of which had tried to get a little farther out into the middle of the stream than the rest. The whole place was black with people, and every man, woman, and child wore dark or light-blue “favours” which were being sold right and left by wrecks of humanity, both male and female, from penny cards. Some had bits of ribbon,

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others little monkeys or birds, every conceivable thing in dark and light blue for a penny.

"'Ere y'are ! Gran' view of the finish, genelman. A bob each. Thank yer. Bill, 'elp these genelman up the ladder."

They had paid their "bobs" and climbed up a narrow plank on to a barge which was less crowded than the others, and from which Barnes Bridge was visible by leaning out a little. Bill, a sturdy henchman of the boss, came to the side and gave them a willing but dirty hand, and ushered them on to the deck, which was covered with an old tarpaulin and otherwise cleared for action. The tow-path in both directions on their side of the river was black with people, and the ferry-men were taking boatloads of men and women over to the Chiswick bank.

The tide was coming up fast, but there was a strip of shingle below the barges. Along this parties of nigger minstrels with three-stringed banjos, patched up fiddles, and the eternal bones made the bright morning hideous with their croaking voices and awful instrumental discords, as they went from barge to barge. Strong men and contortionists took up a pitch on the shingle and tied themselves in hideous knots for the greater delectation of the waiting crowd, and still the tide came higher and higher and the time grew nearer for the start. Women, curiously clad, and still more curious as to face and hair, wearing a hideous combination of primary colours, clambered aboard from time to time and tried to

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sell suffragette papers. Considering the absurd nature of their trade they were treated with remarkable courtesy by the crowd.

The man on whose barge they were, did a constant trade, Bill being in great demand for helping ladies to walk the plank, and the barge became fuller and fuller. Steamers and sculling boats came up and down stream, desirous of lying up in front of the barges. But the Port of London boat, like an old hen with fractious chicks, dodged here, there, and everywhere, and kept them behind the finishing post. A huge steamer laden with disappointed mothers went by waving votes for women flags, and singing some curious kind of "hymn before action." They were received with Gargantuan laughter.

The cockney niggers and the tumblers began to be worried by the tide which now only left them about a foot of shingle on which to disport themselves. One of them, evidently an ex-board-school boy, imagined himself to be Canute, and in a raucous voice commanded the waves to retire. He achieved fame, and what is more to the point, copper wealth. A roar of laughter greeted his witty remark, and a shower of pennies tinkled on the gravel round him. He immediately dropped his regal pose and became a Tom Tiddler, thankful for having earned a really solid meal. Then someone said in a loud voice, "They're off!" and a curious feeling of restless excitement was communicated from barge to barge. People who had been sitting, got up

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and looked down the river, although they knew that fully seventeen minutes must elapse before the crews would round the bend at Barnes Bridge. Kodaks were unfolded and focussed in readiness, newspapers were folded up and stuffed into pockets, "favours" were patted and pushed into neatness and prominence, and all the barges, now afloat, heeled over as the crowd on them moved instinctively to the edge. The Port of London then fluttered with increased anxiety, and chivied boats with hysterical zeal.

Their store of chocolates had long been disposed of. The morning was fairly warm now that the sun was high, and they kept one eye glued to their watches. Five minutes passed. Were they leading? Or were the others lengths ahead, and taking it easy over a beaten foe? Good Lord! Why didn't they buck up? Why on earth had their man crocked? Suppose his substitute wasn't in good training; he would be a dead weight in the boat. Great Scott, how appalling! The suspense was awful. The crowd was comparatively silent. The niggers and contortionists had slipped off unobserved. Even the barge owner was no longer telling people that it was "a bob a 'ead." People craned over watching the river intently.

Only five minutes more.

On Barnes Bridge trains were drawn up, and they could make out heads stuck out of every window.

Suddenly far away in the distance there came a continued booming sound. The cheering grew in

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volume, and came gradually nearer and nearer, and ran down the line of barges.

Suddenly a boat shot under the bridge.

"Oxford's leading!" shouted someone.

"Cambridge three lengths ahead!" came another cry.

Then another boat cleared the bridge, followed by launches puffing along, leaving a great stream of white wash behind them.

"Oxford! Oxford! well rowed. Up! Up! Cambridge! Cambridge!" The yells were one continuous noise, and everyone was cheering at once.

The friend, who had put up a pair of field glasses, turned with a yell. "We're leading! Gad, we're winning! We've pipped 'em. Hurrah! Well rowed, Oxford. Well rowed, boys!"

They yelled until their voices became a hoarse croak. But it was true. The eleventh hour substitute had turned up trumps. Of course! Didn't they know he would all the time? Hurrah!

Nearer and nearer they came, several lengths ahead, rowing in glorious time and style, as one man. "Well rowed, boys!"

Their oars flashed in and out in the sun, and the boat forged ahead, Cox rocking backwards and forwards with each stroke, his face red and his mouth open. The others toiled behind, doing their utmost to recover a length or so, if possible, on the post.

"Well rowed! Oh, well rowed indeed! Hurrah! Good old Oxford!"

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The whole barge was heaving with excitement as the Oxford crew shot past the post, and eased panting and exhausted, while the crowd went on cheering, and the other crew rowed past the post several lengths behind.

CHAPTER XV.

ETIQUETTE: A VACATION INTERLUDE.

THE Vac. was on its last legs. Panting and exhausted it had but two or three days to run. At the last moment an engagement had been scratched and so, as there was nothing doing, the first year man decided to do a music-hall. He paid off his taxi, and mounting the staircase and a fat cigar, the former crowded and the latter borrowed from his father's box without that fond parent knowing anything about it, came into the promenade. It was far too slow to get a reserved seat and sit down all the time. That could be done at any old theatre. No, he was for life and the promenade. Resting his elbows on the cushioned partition, he looked over and scanned the audience to see if there were not perchance a kindred soul somewhere.

The band bowed and scraped and blew to a loud finale, and up went the curtain for number two. The crowd at the partition thickened. The funny man who talked his song with much mouthing and eye contortion was as tedious as usual, so the first year man

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watched the people in the promenade; the oily sons of Solomon who speak a certain fluent English, and on whose cigars one could plainly make out the word Marcella on the red and white bands; the pale, narrow-chested, four-inch collared City clerk whose fingers were stained with the perpetual smoking of cigarettes; the paterfamilias who, having sent a wire home to "the wife" to the effect that he was detained at the office, was having a merry evening with a little lady; the countryman up for the day, flushed and excited, gazing open-mouthed at the twinkling legs of the hardly-dressed dancers, and above all the tired, tireless women carrying little reticules, who flowed up and down, up and down with a watchful eye and a quick understanding. All this was so gloriously different from the theatre at Oxford, where the audience consisted for the most part of blasé men who cheered enthusiastically and ragged thoughtlessly until dealt with by the sturdy chucker-out.

This was life and he was a man indeed.

The bell again went. The dull funny man fortunately had at last come to an end. The first year man began to take an interest. Two men in frock coats strolled on with two little smooth-haired fox terriers, and with great quietness and languidness went through marvellous muscular and acrobatic "stunts." The first year man rather fancied himself as a man of strength, and his delight at the quiet manner in which at the end of each feat the two strolled smoking arm in

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arm up and down the little green carpet, was keen

"Oh hot!" he exclaimed, "I know what a lot of doing that takes. By Jove, I'm all in favour of these two chaps. They're priceless."

Again the artistes strolled up and down, and again the first year man applauded vigorously. This was great! He was all against that rotten engagement which luckily had been scratched. He wouldn't have missed this for worlds.

The band played softly, and the two acrobats performed feat after feat. The audience was delighted.

"Oh, Great Scott!" cried the first year man, "Are these fellers going on all night? I'm just about fed up, bored stiff. Think I'll go and have a drink."

A hand fell on his shoulder as he stood there and a cheery voice said, "Hullo! old man, *how* are you. Had a good Vac.?"

He turned with a thrill of joy, but saw not his pal, as he had expected, but a second year man. A red flush dyed his face to the neck and, with a feeling of intense nervousness, as if he were committing a crime, he shook the outstretched hand of the second year man.

"Er—very fit, thanks," he said. "Yes—put in a topping time."

"Where d'you go?" asked the second year man, not noticing the other's nervousness.

"Oh, Davos. Ski-ing and all that, you know. Er—you had a good time?"

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"Yes, corking. I was in Paris. I'm all in favour of Paris at Christmas-time."

"Oh?"

The second year man fingered his tie and smiled knowingly. "Great place, Paris. Ever been there, old man?"

"Do you—I mean—no, no I haven't." The first year man was unhappy. He felt that it wasn't fair. Why should *he* have to be guilty of this awful breach of form—talking to a second year man while he was still first year? *He* didn't start the conversation. Hang it all, the second year man must *know* that he was still first year. It was beastly cheek of him to talk. But he was very proud and pleased that a second year man should have forgotten himself in a public place like a music-hall and addressed him as an equal.

"Pretty poor show this," said the second year man. "Come and have a drink, cockie."

"Oh—ah—thanks very much, but I—er—don't drink between meals."

"What!" laughed the second year man. "Rats! How about last Fifth? You didn't think twice then. Come on, old man."

"Oh—thanks, all right." They moved away together and steered towards the refreshment bar, where placards hung all about advising one to ask the fairy behind the counter for a "Whisper."

The second year man pulled out a cigarette-case but the other got in first.

"Try one of these," he said, pulling out some

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fat cigars. "My governor's rather careless with the box, and so I——"

"So you just took a handful to show there was no ill-feeling? Good man, thanks." He took one, produced a knife from his pocket, cut a careful V into the end of it and lit it reverently.

"I'm all in favour of a good cigar. These are priceless," he went on, fingering it lovingly. "What's yours, Scotch and soda?"

The first year man had not yet been a full year at Oxford, so he was not quite at ease in a bar. "Er—if you don't mind—I think perhaps coffee and a small liqueur for me," he said.

"All right, old man, don't mind me," laughed the second year man. "A coffee and liqueur and a Scotch and soda please, miss."

The fairy condescended languidly to pass the drinks and receive the money.

"Here's luck, old fellow," said the second year man raising his glass.

"Thanks er—ditto," said the first year man. It was becoming beyond a joke. Here was a second year man talking to one of the first year *and* in the bar of a London music-hall. It was awful. What would the 'Varsity think if they knew? Supposing some man saw them? The very thought started goose-flesh all over him. It was appalling. It wasn't done. He must put a stop to it at once. It would be bad enough for the second year man if it got about, but for him—No. It couldn't go on.

"I say, you know, I—er I'm—I mean you'll be

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third year next October, won't you?" he said bravely.

"Yes, why?" said the second year man. "Good lord!" he said, staring at the first year man and putting down his nearly full glass. "You're still—first year, aren't you?"

The first year man faced him up bravely. "Yes," he said, "I am."

"I—I beg your pardon, I—I quite forgot." The second year man grew very red, dropped his cigar, stooped and picked it up again. "Sorry," he said, turning on his heel. "'Night."

The first year man heaved a sigh of deep relief as he watched the second year man walk hurriedly away. He saw him raise the half-smoked cigar to his mouth, pause and throw it away with a gesture of horror and pass out of the bar.

"Thank Heaven no one saw us," murmured the first year man as he left his coffee and the second year man's drink side by side upon the counter and went back to the promenade in time to see the second year man hurry out of the building. He looked furtively round to see if any 'Varsity men were about and hurried out too by another staircase.

CHAPTER XVI.

INSALUBRIOUS OXFORD.

THE Reform party in the University blew its trumpets in the Sheldonian Theatre with immense vigour. Nevertheless, the walls are standing, and Mr. W. H. Hadow and his one hundred and sixty-four followers went on their way rejoicing.

"Oxford refuses, then," quoth a disappointed fellow and tutor, who had hoped for victory, "to reform herself from within."

Thus the *Daily Mail*, the snipperty *Daily Mail*, the much abused, bound-to-be-read little *Daily Mail*; the mostly old and retired M.A's., who sit and vote in Congregation, and according to the Reform party, are a hindrance to progress and steadily averse from change, will not only continue as heretofore to reside within the mile and a half limit, but will continue to have something to say to those who are actually engaged in teaching whensoever they may be hatching plots to improve—or not, according to the point of view—the conditions of the University.

On this particular subject it is not for me to speak. I am not yet an M.A., and much doubt

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that I shall be ; and were I eventually to be an M.A., certainly should not put myself to the inconvenience of sleeping the required number of nights on the required side of my body, in the required kind of bedroom, within the required limits of Carfax, just so that I might have the felicity of attending Congregation to put a spoke in or a brake on the wheel. Nevertheless, I am out for reform. I have no desire—and, Heaven help me, no power—to alter any of the existing laws of the University, educational or otherwise. In any case mine is the voice that cries in the wilderness. If, however, it is futile for me to attempt to make myself heard on matters which alone are of interest to Congregation and Convocation, I am going to ask for reform, and ask piteously, in certain matters that are purely domestic.

It is my usual custom to decline invitations to breakfast, but on one occasion when I had not been able to get out of it, I was compelled to grope my way in the cold small hours to my host's college. Something to my amazement the pavements were peopled with men and boys in shirt-sleeves, armed with brooms, and from each shop door a cloud of dust flew out into the street. So thick was this unorganized earthly matter that I lost my way, and had to ask it of a "subaltern or puny devil," whom I discerned through the fog. Finally I arrived at the breakfast-table, but to everyone's surprise, and to my own, I could not eat. The sights that I had seen had embittered

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me. At last I knew why Oxford was the most insalubrious city on almost any earth. Not only was all the dirt shot out into the streets, to lie where it fell but for the saving winds of Heaven, but outside every shop there was a bucket, or box, filled with refuse, which gave forth noxious odours, and peopled the air with who shall say how many million microbes? A confirmed optimist, I naturally expected that a rubbish cart would hurry round and remove these poison-spots as quickly as might be. It was the man who brought round the milk who emptied several of the buckets into a large tin in his cart, and drove away in triumph.

Not only was I unable to eat, but I found I could not work, and for these two things was I born. So I took my pipe into my confidence and brooded over the question with carefully sported oak. Surely, I reflected, the authorities could know nothing of this dangerous and iniquitous custom of filling the early morning with the germs of every known and unknown form of disease. If they did know they would long ago have taken steps to put it down. Why, in the sister University even, they have a system of street sanitation which puts us to shame! I refer to the little open drains, continually water swilled, which are the feature of the streets. They are considered of such importance and regarded with familiarity so affectionate, that some of them have names—one, I believe, being called the Cam. Why can we not swallow our pride, and take a lesson from Cam-

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bridge? And I thought that if I were to take my courage in both hands and inform the authorities of this dreadful matter, which, obviously, has hitherto escaped their attention, Oxford would become almost a health resort. But even as I put pen to paper I realised that this would not greatly help matters, for that other remarkable place—the Union—would catch me on the hop.

The thought of hundreds of men who pay their twenty-five shillings every term, going day after day to write their letters in a room whose windows are never opened, and whose floor remains unwashed from year to year, filled me with horror. Surely some of the subscriptions might be devoted to airing and making wholesome so popular a place. As it is, who knows but that every sheet of paper which is sent through the post carries with it the germs of plague and disease to hundreds of fond parents, friends and cousins, who receive these death-traps with joy and pride, all unconscious of the lurking horrors within?

And as I sadly and tidily knocked out the ashes of my pipe against the fireplace, there came to my mind the question of baths. Of course there is always the hip-bath which one's scout so tenderly fills in the mornings, with the mat so carefully placed at the side. In the summer, when through one's wide-opened window the sun streams into the room, and the song of the early birds reproachfully calls one to come out and join them, and the gentle rustling of the leaves fills

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one's mind with the memories of happy hours spent on the placid river, and so on, one's hip-bath can be approached with confidence and a certain amount of bravado. But when, on the other hand, the scout pulls up one's blind in pitchy darkness, disclosing a hoar-rimed window, with the icy wind shrieking insults outside, and the mountain of coats piled on the bed barely sufficing to keep one warm, then the filling of the hip-bath is a farce and a tragedy. How many Spartans are there who brave its numbing terrors? Do not ninety-nine per cent. sprinkle themselves hurriedly, drop the sponge in the water, and ruffle up the mat to make the scout think that they have bathed?

It is a fallacy, and, indeed, an insult, to suppose that we shun washing as a tiresome and unnecessary institution. We left all such feelings behind when we shed our last Eton collar and got hopelessly chaffed by our elder brothers and sisters for appearing in an "up-and-down" for the first time. One has merely to go to the river and the bathing places in summer to prove this. Parson's Pleasure is, perhaps, the most popular spot on the Cher, and this is due, in some sort, to the lack of baths in the colleges.

This dearth of washing accommodation does not matter so much in summer, therefore, but in winter, how are we to keep clean, and consequently healthy, when open-air bathing is only possible to those who indulge in races in the Serpentine on Christmas Day? It has been sug-

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gested that a University vacuum cleaner be installed, and that each college should have its free day. This can be dismissed at once as the ravings of a Little Englander. Therefore, I appeal on behalf of those who cannot, or will not, speak for themselves, to the authorities, to instal a proper system of baths, h. and c., in order that undergraduates, who are all of them healthy animals with a craving for cleanliness, may, freely and unchecked, satisfy the laws of nature and common decency. After all, our clothes are properly washed every week. Why should not we be considered more worthy of attention than our dress? So long as the exterior is clean and fresh it matters not, apparently, what the interior looks like ; but, as is perfectly well known, this attitude has been condemned in all civilised countries, and even in America, for a quite considerable time. I write in this spirit of bland Elizabethan politeness, and refrain from an indulgence of bold hygienic terms merely because I was born in ruffles, and Raleighism is not easy to shake off. But one of these fine days there will be an outbreak of typhoid in this our city, because of the prehistoric conditions that are permitted to prevail in its streets, and it will be discovered that the undergraduate is a private in the army of the Great Unwashed, and there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE LANDLADY.

EVERYBODY who has sisters, or who, if not so blessed, has yet the privilege of knowing other people's sisters, has heard of "Mrs. Beeton's Cookery Book." This book, on a rainy afternoon in winter, when the ground is not ground but puddles, when the grey sky shows no signs of relenting, and the birds have all, with the sun, hidden in despair, is like one of those nibs which one sees advertised on the G.W.R.—the boons and blessings—and is the only means of saving one from the contemplation of *felo de se*, and worse. For when one has read until the letters on the pages become a confused blur, and the taste of tobacco reminds one of that saying about Dead Sea apples, and, not being a Rhodes scholar, one cannot flee to sunnier climes, then the sudden proposal on the part of one's sister, or the other fellow's, to make something to eat, comes as an inspiration, a godsend. We, being men, pretend to be bored with the suggestion, but they, being women, know that it is mere pretence on our part, and produce Mrs. Beeton.

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Within these covers, before we definitely decide what to cook, we see recipes for every kind of luxury, from apple dumplings—a dish which being simple, we never think of making—to Vol au vent à la Toulouse—an article which, being very disliked, we always get. There is one thing, however, for which there is no recipe. That thing is “University pudding.” This is an item which the ordinary person may consider quite simple to make, but in nine cases out of ten, one of the ingredients is left out, and this missing one is certainly not the least important, casting as it does a flavour, quite peculiar to itself, over the rest of the dish. Ask anyone, for instance, the ingredients of a University pudding, and you will hear that you must have so much athletics and scholastic attainments, stirred well, mixed with a certain proportion of caps and gowns, proctors and dons, bulldogs and barmaids, “bloods” and “rabbits,” and there you have the necessary things. This is quite all right, and doubtless the result goes down well, but at the same time the thing is preposterous without that most essential item—the landlady.

Now, the landlady, taken as a class, is one of the most important features of Oxford life. One may think as one passes Smalls, what a tremendous time one will put in up here; how one will cut every possible lecture, do no work and go in strong for athletics; know some ripping people, and altogether enjoy oneself thoroughly. This is very pleasant, and will wile away many dull

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moments. But—and this but is a very big one—one does not take into any consideration that most important factor, the landlady. It is she who decides whether your food will be palatable or not ; it is she who enables you to keep chapels and avoid being gated ; who either provides decent lunches or teas for your “immediate circle,” and so makes them come again or not ; who enables you to turn out well groomed by watching your clean collars and what not. She it is, in fine, who is more or less responsible for whether you get your B.A. or your Blue. And yet in spite of all this, the majority of people entirely overlook her, and it is a question whether she herself realises the vast importance of her kind.

Now that the gravity of the situation is made quite clear, I hope it will be realised that it is impossible to treat a landlady as a common or garden woman, if I may be allowed to say so. By whom I mean of course without any disrespect, the woman whom we take to race-meetings, theatres, dances, and from whom we, in frock-coats, spats, and buttonholes, receive afternoon tea in Park Lane. These are our women-kind to us, as they say so happily in the Gallic, whom we have known from birth, and with whom in consequence conversation is a steady-flowing stream. In our association with these and such as these we do the right thing unconsciously, by instinct, but when we come to deal with the landlady it is quite another pair of shoes. The landlady is like the Brazilian aunt—

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no ordinary woman. She is a being on a different and higher plane, who lives in a world apart, a world of dusters and trays and kitchen stairs ; a world of endeavour and conquest. With her our conversation is halting and our manner subdued. For it is she who holds the sceptre of power ; who is the mistress of our fate—without any *arrière pensée*.

On coming down to bedrock facts, I find that the one from whom there is most to be feared is the landlady of unlicensed lodgings. When talking of unlicensed lodgings one must not suppose for a moment that the rooms are necessarily the scene of wild orgy and bacchic feast. Although they may be, in individual cases, yet the term does not imply that, and it is purely a matter of personal taste. Unlike the landlady of licensed lodgings, who is compelled by statute to bow the neck to the heavy yoke of University red tape, to report of times and seasons, to watch our every movement, and consequently to play the part of janitress with conscious heaviness and solemnity, her sister of unlicensed lodgings being free from such trammels, is a lady of higher dignity. Perhaps the most outstanding difference in their respective politics is that while in unlicensed lodgings the landlady not only tolerates, but even invites and welcomes Hebes of comely mien, in licensed quarters such maids are refused admittance, and sternly packed about their business. As a result, in the former, one's meals are made bright by the charm of the server,

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while in the latter, one has to keep one's æsthetic eye glued to the plate to avoid noticing the untidiness and even, in many cases, repulsiveness of the waitress. To the student of human nature this fact shows more clearly than any other the distinct character of the two natures. Being armed with this knowledge you may set about the matter of approaching an unlicensed landlady without nervousness or apprehension. With that courage born of kindred feeling, you may even look her between her eyes and state your wishes without any beating about the bush ; for not being backed up by decrees in Latin or Blue-books she must treat you as man to man. Her manner towards you may be one of cold and distant business relationship, or one of affectionate and sympathetic motherliness, it matters not ; the unlicensed landlady may be readily and easily overcome without nervousness or delay.

Not so, however, the licensed one, who, apart from her dislike to feminine beauty in serving maids, is bound down by rules, and backed by unseen but ever-present authority. Even in ordinary intercourse with her one feels bound to blend constraint with an admixture of respect and fear, but when one desires to act in opposition to her, then, indeed, one must gird up one's loins for battle. For the fight is not as man to man, but as man against an institution of society. In the skirmish, the landlady will appeal, at the first step from the beaten track, to the powers that be, who loom in the background in the form of

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delegates and proctors. Who shall be so bold as to go on fighting after the appeal to Cæsar has been made?

Up to this point, I have contented myself with singing the glories only of the licensed and unlicensed kinds as a whole. It would need the pen of a Shakespeare, and the profusion of a Benson, to go into all the delicate shades of character which peculiarise this race apart, this wonderful backstairs organism which not merely lives on us, but contrives to inflate its coffers from the pockets of those of us who have not given the matter the attention which it merits, and who consequently fall with dove-like simplicity into the toils laid down by the serpentine landlady. Or who shall deny that in the ample bosom and bland, childlike smile, which are the stock-in-trade of all self-respecting and respected landladies, there lurks a wealth of guile such as a veteran among spiders, one noted for his unfailing capture of the rarest of flies, would envy?

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN REGARD TO DIVVERS.

WHEN one is suffering from a burning thirst for "red tape," if I may say so, the ordinary individual invariably rushes at top speed to Whitehall to assuage it at what he considers the fountain-head. I freely admit that the quality, and quantity, of the red tape as supplied there is remarkably fine—indeed, one of the best in the market. I deny, however, that it has any right to absolute superiority. The individual in question would find some here in Oxford equally good both as regards quality and quantity. As an example of quality in red tape, I lead trumps at once and declare "Divvers," defying anyone to find a better example anywhere. If you do not believe me, I will, with your good leave, point out, like the carper-declamer at Liberty's, one or two little facts about Divvers.

I will not waste your time, or my own, by going into lengthy and precise details of what Divvers is. Everybody, from the fourth year man who has forgotten when he finally did scrape through, to the public school-boy who realises that one day he

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will "see three strange beasts" in front of him, knows that Divvers is the abbreviated and colloquial name for the Preliminary Examination in Holy Scripture. Suffice it to say that everybody, scholars and commoners both, are compelled to satisfy the examiners in this, irrespective of the school they may be reading. The exceptions which prove the rule are the men who have graduated in another University and who obtain a "senior standing" up here. Such men are excused from Divvers.

For the man who gets an easy first in Honour Mods., and who reads Greek with zest and aptitude, Divvers is, of course, a thing to be taken at sight, or, at worst, after a couple of hours of solitary confinement with Hawkins. For these, however, I may as well say at once, blandly, frankly, and with a smile, that this thing is not written. They will find it boring and uncalled for. Unfortunately for myself I am not one of those gifted creatures. I did not even take the humbler Pass School of Mods. I am one of those who has inherited the bump of statistics, and who, in consequence, spends his days in a world of figures and angles, and it is on behalf of myself—charity begins at home—and the others of my kind that, entirely in disagreement with my usual wormlike conduct, I "turn" at last.

Being by nature, then, of a mathematical and not a linguistic bent, who can wonder that I did not give very thorough attention to the dead languages, as they are called, at school? Imagine

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my dismay, therefore, when I found that I was expected to pass Responsions. Responsions is not my point—I saw, I worked, I conquered, and arrived here feeling that my troubles were over. I did not give a thought to Divvers. I fondly imagined that it was but a pebble in my path, which I could kick aside at will. I have now paid a sovereign entrance fee on three separate occasions, and each time I have drawn a blank. The fact that I have lost three sovereigns in entrance fees and various other moneys of which the college has fined me does not prey on me at all. Nor do I consider that there is any ignominy attaching to the failure to get through. Neither of these matters worries me. The thing that does cause me annoyance, the thing which forces me thus to air my grievance, is that although I worked hard on the Greek for at least a fortnight before the exam., and this to the great detriment of the other work which I was forced to lay aside, and read Hawkins to some purpose, yet when I came to the examination and read through the papers I found a series of trick questions for which I was, of course, quite unprepared. That is what annoys me. I translated the Greek fairly respectably, and had a very faint hope that the examiners would temper justice with mercy and let me through. Even after the Viva I had not lost hope. Rather had it increased, for the examiner asked me only two questions, and when I answered both correctly, wished me good morning with a beam-

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ing gold-filled smile. If I had been in normal condition I should have perceived the bitter sarcasm of that smile, but being, as I was, torn between hope and fear, appearances deceived me, and I took it in good faith. I feel very tempted to turn aside at this point, and discourse seriously upon the immorality, the wickedness, the deceit of an examiner's smile. I am sure that I am the right person to do this, as I have had such a great deal of personal experience in the matter, but I must not yield now, as I have set out to pour light on Divvers.

There can be only one reason why Divvers still exists as an examination. Some disloyal spirits have suggested that it is kept on because it is a source of income to the University, a legal means of obtaining extra money, exactly like an anagram competition, except that there are no prizes given. This base suggestion is not worthy of consideration, for I am sure that if the University wanted money she need not resort to underhand means to obtain it. She has only to state the amount required and it would be forthcoming. The reason is simply this. Someone laid down as a rule in the far back medieval period, that in proof of one's eligibility to be admitted to the 'Varsity, one should be compelled to read a certain portion of the Scriptures. This rule was found to work splendidly, and was left in the statutes from year to year, from century to century, until in the year of grace 1911, the authorities, although they fully realise the fact

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that it is an absurd anachronism, have not the heart to destroy such a charming old survival of the Middle Ages. As a general rule, I admit that it is a Philistine act to destroy anything which dates from those times, but in this case, as Divvers is merely a custom which not only does not serve any useful purpose, but has not even any romantic charm about it, except that it revives the complaints and lamentations of generations of souls kindred to my own, I should welcome the hand that would stretch itself forth and destroy Divvers.

I have said that it does not serve any useful purpose. This is viewing the matter in a very mild spirit. Far from being useful, it is a serious stumbling-block in one's path, which, instead of fostering pious and suitable thoughts, draws forth from the victims many a strikingly unprintable epithet. It will always remain a puzzle to me why a man, who in his particular line is a fairly bright star, hard-working, and giving every satisfaction to all concerned, should suddenly be called upon to switch his mind upon some totally different trend of thought, for which he has neither liking nor natural ability, and as a result make himself appear a hopeless duffer to everybody by his failure to get through.

It is, on the face of it, not only unjust but ridiculous, as it causes a serious waste of time, and leaves no good after-effects.

Therefore, I make a strong appeal on behalf of all those who, like myself, are not Greek

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scholars, that Divvers should either be abolished on the grounds of its uselessness of purpose, its annoying effects on the temper, which consequently brings about a certain distaste for the Gospels, or else if, as is probable, there be some statute which prevents its being abolished, that the authorities give it their attention and alter it radically so that it shall be materially and morally useful. I am encouraged in this appeal by the thought of the thousands who, if either the abolition or alteration of Divvers shall be brought about by it, will bless my memory in the ages to come as being one of those men who have succeeded in righting a wrong which affected the entire University of Oxford.

CHAPTER XIX.

OF NEEDLES.

AT first glance it would naturally be supposed, on seeing such a title, that this article is a detailed and precise account of the various stages through which steel passes in Sheffield—I say Sheffield, because although there are many other places where needles are manufactured, yet this particular place is one of the words for the home, like, “Don’t dear,” or, “I say, mother,”—before finally, from the crude chrysalis stage of rough steel it butterflies forth into Lewis & Daly’s Burnished Sharps, size 3, one penny per packet. In common, however, with all first glances, this is erroneous, and at the second look you will see that I have not dealt with the intermediate stage, but have gone bull-headed to the point—to the needle proper.

After careful thinking I have arrived at the conclusion that the needle ranks with the hair-pin, from the utilitarian point of view. The most ordinary use which is made of it is, of course, to sew buttons on our shirts when the laundress has broken them all on the wheel, and to remedy the

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ravages made by big toes on socks. These are, as you may say, its menial uses. We see it kept as a surgical instrument for operations, and, arising out of this, a match-making machine. This may, perhaps, seem rather deep, but if you will plunge with me between the lines my meaning will leap into view. This is the explanation. *Scene*: the Cher. Handsome undergraduate in punt with lady fair. River peacefully gliding. The boatman, a man of great intellect (appearances always are deceptive) purposely refrains from sand-papering pole. Suddenly with smothered exclamation, handsome undergraduate stops poling, and nurses his hand. Lady fair jumps to rescue, with sympathetic cry. Needle produced. Surgical operation performed by her on him. Thorn removed. Mutual passion declared at last. Quick curtain.

Another use to which the needle is put is as an article of food. At this point, if anybody has read so far, the survivor will throw down the article, and say, "Oh how stupid," or words to that effect. Please, before doing so, refer to almost any ha'-penny daily, and you will see that someone has swallowed a packet of needles, and that they are both doing well. Some of these people are perhaps bold experimentalists, who wish to find out if the swallowed needles always come out at the same place, the big toe or little finger. Others, again, may hold the opinion that it has the same effect as gravel upon a fowl. But the fact remains that needles are used as an article of diet by experimentalists.

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Up to this moment I have treated of needles as such. Having passed this elementary stage in the proceedings, I must now differentiate somewhat between the various kinds of needles; for there is such a world of difference between the possession of *a* and *the* needle. A needle is simply the slender little polished bit of steel, the proud possessor of an eye and a point, bright, sharp, and domesticated, but always very stand-offish and touchy when the question of camels is broached. A needle may be, and is, possessed by a laundress, a sempstress, a tailor, one's sister, one's friend's sister, and thousands of others. Anyone, indeed, can go into the right kind of shop, and come away the proud possessor of as many needles as you have money to pay for. That is very simple.

The needle, however, is quite another matter. In the first place, it cannot be bought, or, at least, I've never heard of shops where they keep it for sale. It is true that in London they have raised a monument which is called Cleopatra's Needle. This, however, is a very weak imitation, and doesn't really look like it at all. And, anyway, she did not buy her needle, she got it while she was talking to Cæsar in Mr. Shaw's play, when she was waiting to see what her first impression of Antony would be like. Besides, why should they have represented the needle in stone? It is, as they say in "Peter Pan," neither animal, vegetable, nor mineral, so that from the very outset they are wrong about it.

Then too, although anyone engaged in any of

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the trades mentioned may possess a needle, indeed, several needles if you like, yet as tradespeople they cannot have *the* needle. To have *the* needle you must be merely a man, or woman, as the case may be. That is to say, anybody, irrespective of industrial pursuits, may have *the* needle. The effect on the various possessors is very different. Those who have a needle, an ordinary common or garden needle, just go on calmly sewing, or pursuing the even tenor of their way, in whichever direction it may lead. When these people have *the* needle what a remarkable change comes over them. Some tremble and look green behind the ears. Some become rather pale, and avoid human society. Others go and indulge in strong brandy when possible. Others again, but these are few, burst forth into snatches of uneasy song, for which they usually get heartily cursed by the others near who find that they have got it. In all those who have it the conspicuous characteristic is irritability. Strangely enough, most people never keep the needle for long. For instance, before I knew what the needle really was, I was advised by a friend to go and ask the Stroke of my college boat what was meant by the needle. My friend told me that if Stroke were annoyed I was not to mind, but to insist on an answer. I did so, and came away feeling, unlike the elephant child, warm and very much astonished. Half an hour after the race, in which he had made a "bump," Stroke came and apologized for his rough behaviour. Even then I did not fully realise what the needle

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really was. So I resolved to row myself. I did so, and all went well until the actual morning of the races. Then I found I couldn't work, or sit down happily at all. That whole morning I wandered forlornly through the town, exploring hitherto unknown places, and seeing everything from a most unusual point of view. I could not account for the strange, hollow, absent feeling about the region of the "parva Maria," so to speak, until I was greeted by the Coach: "You look as if you'd got the needle pretty badly." Then it dawned upon me. The scales fell from my eyes, metaphorically speaking, and I perceived that at last I was really one of those highly privileged and experienced persons to whom it is given to suffer from the needle, and I appreciated fully the brutal methods which had formerly been employed upon my person by the Stroke.

CHAPTER XX.

THE SCOUT.

BEFORE bursting forth in praise or condemnation of the scout, it might perhaps be desirable if, for the sake of the uninitiated, I said a few words in explanation of what a scout really is. If any of the initiated read this, they may "skip" here or not, as they please. I personally would advise them to read this part of the description, as several new and interesting facts are brought to light. In the first place then, a scout is a college servant—his brothers in "Tab land" being called "gyps." Of the "gyp," however, I do not intend to write here. The scout or college servant is of two kinds. The one who *has* a scout-hole, and the one who has not. The kind who has a scout-hole is usually entered in the books as "bed-maker," and this is only obtained after long years of service; it is indeed, the blue ribbon of scouting. I must again here pause for the sake of the uninitiated, to manufacture a wheel within a wheel—that is to say, to explain what a scout-hole is. I find that this object is no child's play; it cannot be handled with that roughness which

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characterizes the letters of writers to the morning papers. It has, on the contrary, to be approached with the delicacy and finesse of a poet laureate. To have a scout-hole is to occupy a coveted position which may well be compared to membership of the Académie Française.

Just as the latter has only a certain number of members (forty to be strictly accurate), so the former has only a limited number of holders in each college, and in both cases competition for membership is very keen. The scout-hole is a well ventilated chamber, usually beautifully decorated with china and pottery in which the scout dines from the crumbs which fall from the rich man's table. That is to say, he takes what you leave, and as you know that he is there to take it, and he knows that you know that he is there to take it, you are, of course, very careful to leave him the best part of your food. The explanation of this is very simple. If you don't leave him an excellent meal, two things happen. First, he gets annoyed, and brings your food up late and cold—if at all; and secondly, the other kind of scout, the one who has not got the scout-hole, may die of starvation, as he lives year in and year out on what is given him by the senior scout out of your leavings. Observe here the delicate treatment of the subject; I am now easily and naturally back to the second subdivision of scouts, combined with the second use of the scout-hole.

The sub-divided scout, the one who has no

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scout-hole, is generally of tender years, but whose undoubted intelligence is proved by the fact that instead of following such ordinary pursuits as holding horses' heads, or caddying, for a livelihood, he has chosen the better part, and would rise in the world. There have indeed been cases when scouts have been mistaken for undergraduates. And *vice-versâ*, but we won't talk about that. The scout sans hole, therefore, is the stripling who does all the menial work there is to be done, and gets no kudos. The fact of his getting no kudos is not, of course, ground for complaint. All great men at one time in their existence were accustomed to get more kicks than ha'pence. I have now satisfactorily explained the different kinds of scout, and the blue ribbon of his order. The initiated who did not take my advice should come in again at this point, for it is here that I touch carefully upon the merits and demerits of scouts as a whole.

Every man who is blessed, or cursed, with the possession of scouts will always tell you that his particular combination is the best in the college, that they give him every attention and satisfaction, and that you could not wish for better—unless, of course, you wanted angels; and even then you would not do so well, for the annoyance of rustling wings and twanging harps would absolutely preclude all possibility of your doing any work. You are told by a man that his scouts are without price, but you do not believe him until you have gone into the question personally and thoroughly. It stands to reason that everyone

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with a grain of common sense, who knows how to look after himself, will assert loudly and frequently that his particular scout is a Heaven-sent boon ; this statement is generally made, accidentally, in the scout's hearing. The reason is not far to seek. Being completely in the hands of one's scout as to meals and service, and having discovered by experience that objurcation has as little curative effect as water on a duck's back, one naturally tackles him from a different point of view by tickling his vanity. To go into the question personally and thoroughly is quite simple ; go and have breakfast with your friend. One is quite sufficient. The scout never varies in his habits, good or bad, so if the meal comes up cold and indigestible, you may be sure that your friend suffers a like indignity every morning. After eating a meal at twenty different establishments, one comes away from at least eighteen of them breathing a prayer of thankfulness that one has not been delivered into the keeping of such a scout as has one's unfortunate friend.

The question naturally arises, whose fault is this general feeling against scouts ? Is it the fault of the scout himself ? Of course not. How can it be expected that a scout who is supposed to look after at least twelve men, can give as much satisfaction to each of them as a valet ? The college gives him a very humble salary, stating in its rules that every man is expected to give him a certain sum at the end of each term. Although undergraduates pay their scouts this fixed rate,

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yet they have no say in the matter of choosing him, and they cannot tell him to go if he is not satisfactory. The scout knows this perfectly well, and accordingly jogs along at his own sweet will, knowing that he will get his money at the end of term whatever happens, and rakes in all the perquisites in the way of food and drink that he can possibly lay hands upon. The under-scout naturally imitates his superior, deeming it to be the wisest policy for promotion, and so the result is general dissatisfaction.

Is it the fault of the undergraduate? No, for he is a mere pawn in the great University game, not there to make complaints and consequent inconvenience, but merely to keep the required number of terms in a quiet and gentlemanlike manner. It must be, therefore, the fault of the colleges for maintaining scouts in such an unbusiness-like way. Why cannot the college awake to a sense of the great importance of properly managing this very vital question by employing good men, ex-army and navy men for choice, and, by paying them a fair salary, do away with the iniquitous system of tips? But however much scouts may be disliked, they never seem to mind. They are by nature a bright and cheerful race. This is particularly striking when one indulges in a course of "strict training." In the dim small hours when all those lucky people who may eat and drink normally, or abnormally, according to taste, who may take tobacco in any form, and patronise the drama in the evening,

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are still snugly ensconced between the sheets, the bustle and activity of another world is in full progress. The unhappy being in training crawls cursing forth from his bed railing against fate and coaches, and shivers out into the morning to be greeted with a cheery "Good morning," from scouts over and under. The pessimist naturally interprets into this cheery greeting the most bitter sarcasm, suspecting it to be a mixture of pity and cheek. The optimist recognises it for what it is; the outward sign of inward light-heartedness. After the run, when dressing, one hears them calling to each other across the quad like little birds in springtime, just little airy, good-tempered nothings. If only they would be a little less "bright" and a little more attentive to one's needs, how delightfully different things would be. It has been said that Oxford without examinations would be a paradise, but Oxford with a good, well-oiled scout system would be a very near approach to it.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE ROWING MAN.

SOME are born rowing, some achieve rowing, some have rowing thrust upon them. This is very true of Oxford men. In proof of this we have the Eton man, who comes up already wrapped in a beautiful Leander, and who, therefore, may be said to be born (into Oxford) rowing; while, on the other hand, there are what are referred to by a contemporary as the *οἱ πολλοί* or, as I suppose it would be translated into English, *la canaille*. It seems a very contemptuous term to apply to those good men and true who serve a painful and long apprenticeship to the oar, before they in turn arrive at the joyful Leander stage. These in a sense have rowing thrust upon them, for they are requested to attend at the barge to be tried in a boat before they are permitted to indulge in other pastimes. Take my own case, for instance. Behold me, a timid fresher, having a solitary tea. A tap comes at the door, and there enter in unto me two men wearing what I afterwards find out to be Eights' ties.

“Do you row?” say they.

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"No," say I nervously. "I've never done any. "I'm going to try and play footer."

"Oh, you mustn't do that. Everybody comes down to the river first. Come down to-morrow at two-thirty. We shall expect you. Good night." And out they go again to find other victims.

Thus, usually is begun one's career as a rowing man.

At the beginning one listens anxiously to every word that the Coach says, occasionally having to ask for a translation into ordinary English from the technicalities of the tub. One splendid instance of misunderstanding was when two Americans were being tubbed for the first time. Coach said, "Paddle!" and the Americans lifted the oars out of the row-locks and began to paddle as if the tub were a Canader. These little mishaps soon cease, however, and by the time the togger fours are over the novice begins to think himself a magnificent oar, and has all sorts of theories on the subject—theories which, needless to say, he sloughs as soon as ever he is put on to a slide. As a rule, the rowing man is a very earnest person, and takes life very seriously. Everything is subordinated to the gentle art. It is quite an exceptional thing if he eats a swagger lunch. But, of course, there are rowing men and rowing men. There is the smart, keen man, who is always lively and ready for anything. There is the sleepy individual who seems to be hypnotised by his oar, who never wakes up from the time he gets into the boat to the time he gets out. There is the

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man who thinks he does all the work, and insists on telling you so in the changing room, and when you smile and very naturally refuse to believe him, he goes into a lengthy argument, in which he proves it, if not to your satisfaction, at least to his own. There is usually the man who comes in for any amount of good-natured chaff, because he suffers from the disease of verbosity. There is the man who always keeps his eyes in the boat, but who can tell you at the end of the journey what crews you passed on the way down, who was coaching, and what an unusual number of just-missed-it pretty girls there were at the different points along the bank. There is the man who swings violently out of the boat every stroke, and who invariably grumbles at the frightful way in which she rolls and the consequent rotten rowing. "Though, Lord knows," he adds, "*I do my best to sit her level.*" Then there is the man who never grumbles, who has little to say, but who pulls about twice his own weight. There is the cheery optimist, who is somewhat rare, who says, after having returned from the worst piece of rowing ever known, "Well, boys, we were pretty bad, but we're better than we were yesterday."

These are some of the people who are dedicated to the service of the oar, which service demands more time and endurance than any other. Day after day, in sunshine, snow, rain, hail, blizzard, and simoons, your rowing man finds himself down at the barge getting ready to ply the lusty oar, and whatever the weather be like, there he is on

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the spot. Another of the great characteristics of rowing men is their language on the tow-path—at least, this is generally understood. If this is true, how is it that so many ladies are seen every afternoon littering the tow-path? Only two explanations are possible. One is that they are fond of language, which is absurd. The other is that there is no language at all. Personally, I am rather inclined to believe that the latter is the case. But, after all, even suppose that the language on the tow-path is strong, the tow-path is not made for the casual female strollers—at least, at the time when the crews are out. Strong language, too, is the safety-valve of mankind—which of course does not include womankind—and, though as a regular practice is not to be encouraged or cultivated, nevertheless now and again is quite as good as a pill. Besides, it seems peculiarly unfair to put this down to the tow-path as its special feature. I once heard a coach say, “Four, you darling, don’t you think you could get your hands away quicker, and sit up, love!” and in spite of that, Billingsgate is not supposed to be in it with the tow-path.

Then, of course, the cox is included in the crew, so I mustn’t forget him, although he is usually so small and weedy that I think it would take more than one to avenge himself for such forgetfulness. Just as there are rowers and rowers, so there are coxes and coxes. It is a thrilling sight to see a fresher coxing an eight which is fast bearing down on a ferry punt. If he is a cox all

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is well ; if he is a cox, however, it is no usual thing for the crew to make a bump before they are even in training for the races. Then, too, some coxes have a strong liking for steering an S-shape all along the river, or for zigzagging violently from bank to bank. On these occasions he is usually quietly addressed through a megaphone from the bank, and Stroke also whispers sweet nothings in his ear. There is the cox who suffers from lack of voice, and who is always bellowing at individual members of the crew. Another sort of the genus cox is the one who never knows what to say when you are rowing a course, and who remembers parrot cries at the wrong time. And again, there is the man who, for want of something better to say, imitates the London 'bus driver, and calls out the various stations and landmarks as you go by.

Then, of course, in the Race Week there are the keen supporters who run with you, and shoot pistols at crucial moments, who enable you to get bumps, and without whom the crew would be nowhere. These have a curious habit of calling on one personally from the bank by number. "Well rowed, Four!" for instance, or Two, or whichever it is that their lodger or pal rows. I have always believed that they do it in a spirit of friendship, but nothing is more irritating than to hear this while you are rowing. It has one good effect, however. It makes you realise that you must be rowing pretty rottenly, or else they would not call out to you particularly to encourage you.

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In Eights Week the keen joy of the racing is very much counter-balanced by the needle before the start, and the terrors of needle are only outweighed by a bump. And, undoubtedly, the best moment of the whole week is after your final race on Wednesday night, and you have a break-training tea, and light your long cold pipe.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE POOR MAN.

"THE prime hero of the twentieth century is the poor man. He has taken the place once held by the knights of the round table. He is Sir Galahad, brave as a lion, spotless as a dove. The glass of fashion and the mould of form, he engrosses all the virtues of the human race, and alone among men is entitled to universal respect. It matters not that his head is as empty as his pocket. He is noble, he is intelligent, he is supreme. Is he not poor? And does not poverty, honest poverty, carry with it something far better than mere brains or common energy?" Such is the picture, and a most lifelike one too, drawn in the *Blackwood's Magazine* of *The Poor Man*, that battle-cry of the reformer, that hypocritical excuse shrieked out incessantly by the lime-light seeker, the ego maniac, the soi-disant philanthropist. This charming description of the poor man is, I take it, drawn from that class, for instance, which populates various parts of East London where five families live in one room—one in each corner and one in the middle—where beer is the heaven-sent solace, and

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drunkenness the apotheosis of human desire; where there is only one other amusement besides fighting, and where the tattoo artist works overtime and subscribes to all the leading charitable institutions. This is the kind of being whom the reformer would see enthroned in our midst with every luxury in the form of scholarships and endowments. This is the man who is to imbibe all the learning that Oxford can give, both academic and social, and who afterwards shall thus be fully equipped to face all the problems of life. This, if I read correctly, is the Sir Galahad, the glass of fashion, the spotless dove. A most charming and Arcadian scheme—for the reformer, who, of course, does not mingle with the throng which he has brought into being, but who stands at a safe distance, free from all infection, a most interested spectator. It is also doubtless a most satisfactory scheme for the spotless dove, the poor man, who for three years is lifted from a land of squalor and chimney factories, to a heaven of beautiful buildings, refined atmosphere and no work to do. I don't mean, of course, that we who are, after all said and done, the University, do not work. That is not at all my meaning, for we come up solely in order to work. What I mean is that they, who are used from time immemorial to work with their hands, and not with their brains, will be like fish out of water, when they find that they have to sit down in front of a book for several hours at a stretch and work without their hands.

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And so after they have lived a free and workless life for three years, not knowing any one socially save those who are of their own class, and consequently not receiving any of the broadening effect that the 'Varsity has for those persons who are proper to come up, they will be turned loose on the world again, and assuredly their last state shall be worse than their first. For it is absurd to believe that any such will become our pals or even our friends, as we understand the term friends up here. The position would be that they would stand round and watch us as if we were gold-fish in a bowl. They would never be able to break the bowl to mingle with us, for then we should disappear, and they would be left alone.

All this talk, therefore, of poor men strikes me as being ill thought out. Why, too, is it that the reformer, always so ready to begin operations on other people and things, never turns his attention to himself? It is generally well known that critics are people who are unable to write plays themselves—plays, that is to say, which are considered good enough for production. Is it the same sort of thing with the reformer—setting a thief to catch a thief? Another rather striking point about it is, that after Ruskin Hall should have been weighed in the balance and found wanting, in the sense that its members not only do not receive a 'Varsity education in its real meaning—which of course is that they do not become undergraduates such as we are, but have no interests in common with us, and do not figure in

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our everyday life—and, though they do not return as they are popularly supposed to do, with an enlightened and fully-equipped mind to the life which they have left to come up here, but become Socialist ranters of the worst type, dissatisfied with life, always striving after what they have not got, and not really knowing what it is for which they strive—after all this what is the use—and I ask in all humility and desire for enlightenment—of bringing more such men up here and unfitting them for all work, both physical and mental? Surely when the experiment—and I take it it was an experiment—has failed, it is a folly to repeat the process. As to the question of their becoming unfitted for work, it is not necessary to dilate upon it here, as it has been done by a far better pen than mine—mine is only a half-crown fountain. Only if I may be permitted to indulge in a piece of wild hyperbole, how can a man who has been to heaven for three years be expected to go back at the end of that time to hell? Another thing which strikes me is, that the reformer doesn't apparently realise that, apart from the Ruskin Hallites, there are already up here poor men who are, some of them, far more deserving than any of the beer-drinking, spittoon patronisers who form the St. Galahad brigade of the *Blackwood's* article. These poor men are with us and of us; they do most of the things which we do, and are almost always most charming and companionable people. But they are entirely on their own, ignored by the reformer in his schemes, and absolutely

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unhelped. It is a thousand pities that all these wildcat schemes should be afoot, when it would be so much more profitable to begin at home. Of course at this particular time of term we are all, in a sense, poor men. We do not have to think about where we are to get our next meal—in fact, we usually give some thought as to what we shall have which will go down best—neither do we have to lay aside our pipes and reckon up the few scarce bawbees left to us, but at the same time there is no denying that money is tight, deuced tight—this, however, is by the way.

The poor man at Oxford is usually the one who is the most full of enthusiasm and activity, the one who well realises that, after all, time is short, and that he is very lucky to be here at all, and who consequently does everything that can be done to its fullest extent, and makes the most of his time. He is usually a great worker, allowing himself the expense of midnight oil, which he burns to a very good purpose.

In view of all these things in favour of the poor man, such as he already exists among us, why cannot the reformer tear up all his vast plans and undertakings for bringing up people whom we do not want at all, and turn his attention, if, indeed he must keep himself busy, to those who are wanted and who do not go on strike?

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE "BLOOD."

A HORSE with "blood" about it is almost always the thing to "back." A "blood" at the 'Varsity is the same thing. A "blood" is not a fellow with "blue blood" in him, nor has a fellow with "blue blood" anything to do, necessarily, with a man who has represented his 'Varsity. Strangely enough, these last are "blues," and, in one sense, "bloods," but the fact that they combine the two is no proof that they are the one.

In Oxford every man is allotted a certain position in the make-up of the 'Varsity. His position is not given him by his tutor, or the proctor, or anyone of the kind, but by his parents. According to his nature, which, I believe I am safe in saying, comes to him from his parents, so does each man find his appointed and preordained level. Every man, before leaving his public school says either openly or in the secretness of his inmost thoughts, that on going up to the 'Varsity he will either be one of the rowing set, or the cricketers, and so on, thus acknowledging that there are many component parts in the University. So, then, just as the sportsman makes his

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choice with firmness and decision, so does a certain section of public school men say, "I am going to be a 'blood.'" Needless to say, he does not make the decision public. His dignity might suffer from the callous remarks of the brutal sportsman. But it is, nevertheless, fortunately true that the number of men is great whose one idea is to be a "blood."

There are many interpretations of the term "blood." Some will tell you that a "blood" is a man who has got his Blue and is doing well up here. Others will tell you that he is the sort of man who swaggers about in immaculate clothes—for which he does not pay until absolutely compelled to—and buys up the front row of stalls at the theatre. Both these explanations are true. A man who has got his Blue and who works for the greater credit of the 'Varsity is a "blood" in its best sense—the sense of his being a power in the land. The immaculate stroller also is a "blood," but the definition is not complete. The point that is lacking is that our stroller friend, our clothes-peg, in its best sense, is only a "blood" because he can do nothing else so well.

Either he has been tried at the river, or the nets, or the football field, or the hundred and one other strenuous features, and has not found them to his taste, or else he has the bacillus of do-nothing-and-look-pretty-ism in his system. Consequently, having missed the athletics, he turns his attention to matters sartorial and fills the post of High Stroller and Corn-stalker-in-Chief to the

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'Varsity, so that the whole world may see with wonder and delight his open-work silk sock, his Joseph's waistcoat, his "nuit-blanche" handkerchief, his miraculous cravat—it may not be insulted with such a term as tie—and his wonderfully skirted and waisted coat.

Of course, all this equipment which every member of the army of "bloods" is bound to have, is very good for trade, in the long run, and, meanwhile, the whole army of them deserves a public vote of thanks for furnishing us with a constant source of amusement and wonder. How it is that they do not get sent down for ploughing in exams.—Cornstalking takes up time—is inconceivable. Perhaps they do, but it passes unnoticed owing to the numbers of terminal recruits. Who shall say? Of course the "blood" has no suspicion of the joy which he affords to the onlooker; indeed, quite on the contrary, he takes himself with a grim earnestness and determination which is his most praiseworthy characteristic. Take, for instance, the scene at about 10.30 a.m. He rises gracefully from his downy bed, strips off his magenta pyjamas, bathes and gets into an elaborate pink shirt. Shall he wear an ordinary stiff collar with a pink bow-tie, or a soft pink collar with a blue, white-spotted dog-tie? The next point for grave deliberation is whether the socks shall match the shirt or the tie. After several tries before the glass the question is solved to his satisfaction. But then—perhaps most difficult of all—the question of waistcoats

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comes up. What is the most suitable colour from his numerous collection to form a connecting and harmonious link between the combined effect of shirt and tie on the one hand, and socks on the other? Again several attempts are made before the glass, and, finally, he wanders down gracefully to breakfast with a feeling of pride in the consciousness that he at least has begun the day well and dutifully.

Such care and thoroughness are only to be found in men who would rather not do a thing at all unless they can do it well. These are the men who, in the words of the advertisers in American magazines, "get there all the time."

The "blood" in a punt is one of the most inspiring sights. His hair is perfectly groomed, not a single one being out of place, his carefully and beautifully pipe-clayed shoes never get spoiled by tricklings, the crease in his trousers resembles the smile that won't wash off, his arm swing is a joy for ever, and although with surprising energy he makes the punt travel quite fast, yet he never gets hot and beady, and is the envy and despair of all beginners. In summertime he is, of course, one of the features of the river. His smart, much-gold-painted punt can be seen by American tourists at all hours of the day. Work is entirely an unknown quantity. After all, what man ever comes up here simply for work? The thing is inconceivable, absurd. Oxford is not the place for work. This is obvious. Even the authorities recognise the fact that this is the

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place to which to come for education but not for work. Education is such an entirely different thing from work. After all, work is usually the effect and not the cause of education.

But a "blood" is always an artist, and an artist of no mean order. In his dressing, his walk, in the things he eats, in punting, in living, he is always the complete artist, sparing no pains in preserving harmony, if not mentally, which is always the exception, at least materially, which is the thing that matters to the crowd.

When I say that he is an artist I beg of you not to think that this includes or is synonymous with "the artistic temperament." Heaven help all unfortunate people who are possessed of an artistic temperament. It is one of the greatest curses of humanity, and cannot be beaten as a breaker-up of homes. In fact, it would be more desirable to be inflicted with St. Vitus's dance than with an artistic temperament. To say, therefore, that a "blood" has the artistic temperament, as a rule, is not only a false statement but is as great an insult as to say that he "means well." By saying that he is an artist I mean that his outlook on life is artistic, harmonious, and good-natured. The fact that his mannerisms and habits are put down as "side" by the crowd shows their complete lack of understanding. The "blood" does not affect a certain manner in his walk or accent in his talk merely to show off before other people. This is a malicious libel on his intelligence. But the real reason of his, to

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other people, peculiarities is that he conceives them to be more correct, more artistic, than the ordinary method employed by the crowd. Another point to his credit is that, although he deplores the manners of the crowd, yet he does not rush round and try to convert people to his point of view. No, but quietly and unobtrusively our friend lives up to his own ideals without intention to harm or annoy anybody or anything. He may be considered a "slacker" by some because of his sedentary life, because he is not strenuous and burning with enthusiasm. But there are so many strenuous enthusiasts who rush about and buzz with far less purpose than a bumble-bee, that it is a relief to come across the gentle saunterer, who, heedless of the taunts and jeers of the madding crowd, quietly, and, it must be confessed, somewhat egotistically, pursues the even tenor of his way.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE WORKING - MAN .

NOT being, alas ! a Ruskin College man, I cannot interlard this with brilliant, easy-flowing epigrams; nor am I a member of Balliol, and so, after the fashion of his kind, able to pour forth economic facts and fictions, cunningly interwoven for the ensnaring of the cautious and canny. My apologia is the desire to open up the mental horizon of those perspiring energetic persons, who, despite the length of their arduous toil, manage to snatch a few hurried moments daily to fling gems of wisdom and research, through the medium of the daily press, to an eager and watchful world. These gem-flingers have, as yet, turned their attention only to those of our brothers whose custom it is to go through life with a little wooden, spoon-shaped instrument buckled to their left legs, below the knee, by a strap outside their corduroy trousers. I do not for a moment challenge their knowledge of this brand of society. In fact, I would even go so far as to say that what they do not know about it is not worth knowing. But, inasmuch as these learned gentlemen do not

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cast their pearls before swine, but before an enlightened and cultured public, would it not be wise to direct the search-light of their knowledge upon the working-man as he already exists at Oxford?

Now, before launching into a sea of discussion on this subject, it would be wise to define the working-man within the meaning of the Act. To me, a very normal person, who does his best to conform to the usages of his college by wearing the correct shade of sock, and the right thing in woolly waistcoats, the words "working-man" do not conjure up the picture of a spitting, beer drinking, bare-armed, tattooed man, listening enraptured to the burning stream of oratory with which Teuton tub-thumpers daily wash the steps of the Martyrs' Memorial; nor do they necessarily convey to my mind the concertinas, mouth-organs, picture hats, and chars-a-banc which litter Hampstead Heath on a Bank Holiday. These are the persons who, as these lapidaries assure us, are clamouring with a vehemence which may not be denied for University education, in order that they may face more valiantly the problems of life. The words "working-man" mean, to my mind, "a man who works." Now I know, not from casual observation or mere hearsay, but from careful study and logical deduction, that the gentleman who thus dedicate their few spare moments to upholding briefs for those working-men who, in a sense, cannot speak for themselves, are men of many words.

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To them controversy is the breath of life. Deprive them of the opportunity of argument and they become as stale beer, lifeless and insipid. Furthermore, their opinions are so firmly rooted in them, that they are well-nigh unalterable. Therefore I will refrain from drawing myself into discussion with them by trying to prove to them that they are working on a fallacy; that their "working-men" are not really working-men in the sense of men who do work. I could, of course, prove this point conclusively to men of ordinary intelligence in a very few words. These gentlemen, however, are not of ordinary intelligence. So, with infinite regret, I turn from this debatable ground to the subject of those who work in Oxford.

It were possible to fill many tomes on the early beginning, never ending work of the college servant who ministers so faithfully and well to the undergraduate wants; on the other hand, I might dwell proudly on the busy workaday life of the don, who can only rise to such a supreme niche of honour by dint of years of toil, and who, when there, must sustain so arduous a battle to keep his brilliant position. These are subjects which are, unhappily, too little known. It is not for me, however, to linger on them here. My duty is to enlarge upon the undergraduate man who works.

Those unfortunate beings who, by the accident of birth and surroundings, have not been able to come up to a University, and who, con-

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sequently, have only a second-hand newspaper knowledge of its system, will probably laugh at the idea of an undergraduate working. These can be dismissed at once by a mere whisper about the unripe grape. At the 'Varsity to-day everybody works. The only distinction is that the man who gets his Blue is not considered a worker, in spite of the fact that Blue-hunting is, if not harder, at least just as hard work as digging roads or sweeping a crossing. The explanation is that the latter does it professionally and gets paid; the former does it for love, and pays to do it. Therefore the workers at Oxford are narrowed down to those who get through examinations. By "getting through" examinations I do not mean just scraping through on a fortnight's cramming. That is not work. What I mean is strenuously reading in term and vacation alike, and coming out from the gladiatorial struggle with a first.

The worker is never one of those who have work thrust upon them. He is born that way and cannot help himself. He comes up wearing a scholar's gown, and looks forward with eager delight to reading the Grace in hall—an honour reserved for the privileged and brainy few. It is always possible to pick out a worker in a crowd. There are certain infallible outward marks by which you may know him. In certain colleges he always cultivates hair below the level of the ear, with an inclination towards a growth on the upper lip; in others he talks to you with a strong

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North Country accent ; but in all colleges you will find him creeping about quads and passages with an expression of apology for his very existence. In whatever college you may find him, his ambition is always the same ; a first in Mods, the Newdigate, and a first in Greats. These are no small things to accomplish. Those who attain them are, indeed, the Blues of the academic world. Therefore it is absolutely inconceivable why such mentally energetic people should be, or seem to be, so ashamed of themselves. Instead of inhabiting out-of-the-way rooms, showing up only at meal times, and never having a word to say for themselves, why do they not invest in a razor, spruce themselves up, and blossom out from unknown nonentities into brilliant stars in the University cosmos ? Far from being as numerous as lambs in March, they are alas most rare, and their social circle is very exclusive. The open-air sportsman is strictly barred from it. He, of course, does not realise what he is missing, but goes on in his characteristically self-satisfied manner, storing up for himself athletic distinction and health, but ignorant of the great intellectual joys which he is missing. I, however, happen to be a weird combination of the outdoor man and the worker, and so am admitted, albeit on sufferance, to the social side of the worker's life. Hence I can speak with some little authority of those advantages from which the athlete is debarred. What greater pleasure could one desire than to be the intimate of such great minds.

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Their after-dinner conversation is not the senseless chit-chat indulged in by the mere athlete, harping eternally on his one exceedingly dull string. No, the working-man when he foregathers with his kind is not bound down by his immediate daily labours. His mental horizon is more vast and on a higher plane, and his conversation opens up new and glorious worlds of thought. And what, too, of the career of the working-man? His vocation is one of the most important, the most coveted of all. For he is the man who must escort on their walks the little sons of gentlemen; who must encourage them to wear on the lapel of their coats dark or light blue favours; who must instil into their delicately-nurtured minds the elements of Greek and Latin. What more noble and inspiring than after years of study during the best period of life, to come down from the University filled with the sacred fire of enthusiasm for that most vital and inspiring career—a schoolmaster?

CHAPTER XXV.

THE "SLACKER."

I HAVE tried my very hardest to get out of having to write about "slackers." I did my very best to deceive my conscience into the belief that at Oxford, which, although written down as the home of lost causes, is now, always has been, and ever will be, the scene of vast enterprises and endeavours, the incubator, rather than the cemetery, of high hopes and mighty schemes, "slackers" were unknown, or, rather, dodo-like quantities. But, happily or unhappily, according to the point of view, truth will out. You may lock it in your skeleton-cupboard with the latest American padlock, or even kill and bury it in a dim past, but all these precautions are in vain. In its own good time out it pops, like a cuckoo when the hour strikes.

I tried all these methods, but in spite of them, here I am sadly, but bravely, owning up to the truth that "slackers" do exist at Oxford, where opportunities of every sort are as numerous as blackberries in a hedge, and may, with a little care on the subject of thorns,

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be taken with the greatest ease. The wisdom of noticing where one is going before one actually goes there has been accepted through the ages, so before setting the hand to the plough it were as well to state calmly and dispassionately the qualities which constitute a "slacker."

From the worker's point of view, an athlete is a "slacker" because he prefers to regard schools as a myth. On the other hand, to the athlete the worker is a "slacker" because he passes his time in an academic atmosphere of ink and paper. The reconciliation of two different points of view is more difficult than pig-driving in Ireland. So, as I have mislaid my sword—a beautiful silver-handled thing with three blades, presented by a fond admirer on the occasion of a certain four-hundredth birthday—I will slip under the knot without cutting it, and compromise with the opinions of these two very different kinds of men.

The "slacker" is the man who, because of some curious kink in his nature, does not feel any desire to do anything but satisfy his primeval instincts—eating, drinking, and what not; who smokes as much as he wants; pretends occasionally to dally with a little work, stopping directly there comes a welcome interruption; never takes exercise, although he sometimes laments the fact that his waist-line is losing its neatness; who is, in short, a rank egoist. Because all this is due to a kink in his nature he would deserve our pity were it not that he openly glories in his comfortable slackness; therefore our pity is changed into absolute contempt

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for such men, who are no good to their college, the 'Varsity or themselves. Paradoxically enough, these men are invariably most charming table companions, bright and amusing in their conversation, possessed of a keen sense of humour, altogether delightful people. But, unfortunately, their charms do not weigh with the materially minded examiners who "have a lust for mere marks," and so our friends are too frequently compelled to imbibe knowledge of another breast than that of Alma Mater.

Many harsh things have been written about this apparent callousness on the part of the examiners in causing the rustication of delightful people, but, after all, it is not their fault, poor things. They are but doing their job ; it is what they are paid for.

So much then, for the "slacker" proper. But in addition to this division of the genus "slacker," there is another and quite objectionable kind, a kind which is blind to its own slackness, which rushes hither and thither, always busy about some noisy nothing, with never a moment to spare, which never works because it is far too busy, which never goes in for any kind of sport because it hasn't got the time to waste on things of such little value.

If you seek results of his hurry, you find them not, and if you call him a "slacker" to his face, he indignantly points out all the things he says he has done during the past week. It is useless to try and convince him of it. He really and

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seriously believes that Oxford, that the world, would stop if he were put out of action. The responsibility, he will inform you, of all the important things that happen devolves on his shoulders. His is the hand that turns the mangle. He spends fortunes on stamps, rushes away from tea to attend important committee meeting, wears out three pairs of brogues per term in trotting round on urgent affairs of State, and goes to bed tired out under the weight of all the pies in which he has the fingers of both hands. This is the real "slacker." He thinks he does everything, and in reality does nothing. He thinks he supplies a long-felt want, while, in point in fact, everyone with whom he has any dealings whatever, is only too anxious to get rid of him. This kind of person is one of those happy beings who has climbed to the tip-most top in the great art of "self cod." He is a happy being, because it is peculiarly delightful to be able seriously to think oneself to be what one is not. He does not merely seriously think it, but he is absolutely convinced beyond all possibility of argument that he is what he isn't. Such a state of mind, although very real to the man himself, is, of course, perfectly ridiculous to the spectator. But Oxford men were ever kind-hearted—even to such as Keir Hardie—and so the poor dreamer continues in his delusion. But when he goes down from Oxford—that great preparatory school—and comes to grips with life, then comes the sad awakening.

Another very common specimen of "slacker" is

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the one who eats because he has to live, who lives, not because he wants to, but from the accident of his birth, and who just passes the time because it has got to be passed somehow, without any knowledge of how he does it. Such as these may be seen at any time wandering slowly and aimlessly down any of the main streets at any hour after eleven in the morning. If they do anything, it is merely because it occurs to them at the moment, and they never do it well. These bored and blasé individuals never turn a hair at anything that happens either to themselves or to anybody else. Everything is a matter of course.

"Slacking" is one of the most difficult of the fine arts. Unless you are born a "slacker," which in very many ways is most advantageous, proficiency in the art can only be arrived at after serving a long and assiduous apprenticeship. Take the beginner, for instance. He cannot "slack" until he has made careful plans and arrangements to do so, and when he is doing so his conscience pricks him like a packing needle. Consequently, the whole pleasure and grace of the thing is gone, destroyed. There is no delight for him in not doing the things he ought to be doing, which, after all, is the greatest joy of the full-blown "slacker." So, to the beginner, slacking is even harder and more irksome than the other thing.

Later on in the game, when he has succeeded in garrotting his conscience and in rubbing off the awkward corners, the whole art of the matter is revealed to him, and, if one may say so, he goes

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in for it bald-headed. There are many who never succeed in stifling their consciences sufficiently to enable them to go the whole hog, and so they content themselves with periodical bouts. In the same way as a man eats a very hearty meal simply to lay a foundation for a beautiful cigar, so does this man do strenuously the things he ought for three or four weeks in order to enjoy all the more a complete "slack" for the rest of term. These "half-hoggers" never really grasp the idea in its entirety, and after a few years slough off even the periodical fits, and come to look upon it as a kind of measles or any child's disease.

It is in this that University men have an enormous advantage over less lucky mortals. For while the latter must launch at once into the open sea and pass through all the phases of life at a disadvantage, the former is safe in harbour for four years, during which time he can develop peacefully and without any outside fear.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE BLUE.

OUTSIDE the 'Varsity, the whole world and his wife know, or think they know, what a "Blue" is, even if they refer to him with a smile of condescension. The smile is due to ignorance, for it is necessary to be one of the Three Thousand to appreciate fully the vast importance of a "Blue." One may talk pleasantly and without restraint of Blue Beards, and Bags, and little Boys as being suitable for easy family discussion, but the subject of 'Varsity Blues must be broached with bated breath and in all fearfulness.

The everyday undergraduate is a man with adventurous ideas on the subject of socks and waistcoats, but apart from that little peculiarity (or, dare one say, weakness?) is nothing out of the ordinary. Not that I wish for a moment to class him with the crowd; the very fact of his being an undergraduate lifts him out of the ruck and puts him in a little pigeon-hole apart, from which he may look down patronisingly on the outside world. The word ordinary applied to him is meant to convey merely that he is human like the rest of people, and enjoys and suffers

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in the same degree as they do. The "Blue" however, is not an everyday undergraduate, although he may hold the same sartorial beliefs. So by logical deduction, it is true to say that he is out of the ordinary—very much out. A Blue is to an undergraduate as a bug is to a flea—he catches the eye more and creates far more of a sensation.

Judging from the crowd of satellites which follow his every lead with a blind admiration and obedience which would put a Hindu fakir to bed and knock spots off any mere fanatic, it is safe to conclude that a Blue is a very demi-god. Of course it is not his fault that satellites kneel and adore. Before he got his Blue they did not do it; it was only after the transformation that they began their games, and it probably bores him stiff, but because he is a Blue he must conform to the traditions of the thing, and at least appear to like it. This, indeed, is one of the most difficult and trying ordeals through which a Blue must go. For the hangers-on are, as an invariable rule, the wasters, the do-nothings, the dressy, unbrained section with which every college has to put up. How can it be possible that the demi-gods, who have not only physique, but also intellect, a fact proved by their having climbed to the top of their respective trees, can be contented with, much less enjoy, such incompatible society? This, alas! is their Achilles heel, their one vulnerable spot which can be fastened on by the enemy.

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A country cousin of mine came up last term, and was very keen to see one of these wonderful beings in the flesh. The fact of *my* being one did not affect her. That was different somehow. Familiarity had bred unrecognition of my merits; she must see a real live *strange* Blue. Every man who passed us in a soft collar with anything like a dark coat on, was to her excited imagination one of these wondrous beings, and she was bitterly disappointed at my telling her that not one of them was. She then asked me how to know one when she saw him.

"Well," I told her, "when you see a man swaggering along, looking as if he owned the place and had paid a great deal for that privilege, you can be morally certain that that man is a Blue."

She thought that they must be very conceited to do such things. I assured her that it was not so. Were they not the most renowned and wonderful beings in the 'Varsity, far above a simple "first" or even a "double first?" Had they not fully earned the right to look as if they had bought the place? So, after some argument, the country miss agreed with me that a Blue is perfectly justified in looking how he likes and in doing what he pleases, from the mere fact of his being what he is.

Naturally, it will be said that I, having previously stated that I am a Blue, have no earthly sort of grounds by which to justify the arguments used to overcome the cousin, being prejudiced in having

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all these little peculiarities. Besides, even if it were not so, is it not possible for a man to sink all personal bias when arguing on a question of such great moment—and that, too, with a woman? Everybody, or at least all those who have attained the use of reason, knows that a women does not argue logically. Nor does she need to, because she is a woman. No one could have been more surprised than myself when my female cousin agreed that I was right. I quite realise that all that is *à propos* of boots, but then boots can be such an interesting subject sometimes. However, to return to our sheep.

It is quite unnecessary to put down a long list of the things for which one gets a Blue. It is well known that the respective merits of the various sports have been carefully weighed in the scales of justice by the great Committee, which decides these matters, and that of course a man who can hop in a whitening made ring, and propel an iron ball for a distance of between thirty and forty feet, is far more deserving of a full Blue than the silly ass person who climbs into a square hempen ring with another man and get his nose pushed about and his mark marked. It is the skill of the thing that the committee thinks about. Anybody can talk left jabs and right hooks and cross-counters and then stand up and put his man out. It is so simple. But it is not every one who can balance an iron shot on his hand and throw it from him in a straight line. It takes years of deep study and concentration to do this. Then

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too, it was most ably and decisively proved the other term that lacrosse was quite out of the running for a Blue. It is merely, so we are told, a recreation for out-of work sprinters, if I may put it in that loose way, combining interest and amusement by which they may keep fit for the next season. These little points have been thrashed out by those who know, and sentence passed on them. And so it is that the brainy ball-tosser gets a full Blue, while the vulgar boxer is relegated to a back seat, and only gets a half, and the lacrosse player just has to go on doing it for the fun of the thing.

The question of the half Blue is a very curious one. Although it is given for identically the same reason as a full Blue is given, for representing the 'Varsity, the omniscient and infallible committee considered that the merits of certain sports did not come up to the same standard as those for which the full colours are awarded, and consequently it came about that as the humble fighter, for instance, did not represent Alma Mater as well as the weight putter, he should only receive half the kudos. The reason why the one is not as good as the other is unknown, and perhaps does not even exist, but as the committee is avowedly infallible and therefore cannot err, the situation has been accepted with resignation and even approval.

When the question of awarding full or half colours to a form of inter-representative athletics arises, the exponents of that particular sport have

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no say in the matter at all beyond appealing in the first instance for recognition. The whole subject is, supposedly, well threshed out by the omnipotent committee, which gives its final and irrevocable decision after several weeks debate. Their verdict, once given forth, is not to be swayed, much less broken down, by further appeals from the players, and even after a public debate on the question in the Union which, as every one, even the Academy, knows, or ought to know, is the voice of the whole University, their decision remains unshaken. "Men may come and men may go, but they decide for ever."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE HOOLIGAN.

THE night was dark. The sun had done its duty very strenuously during the day, and had sunk to its well-earned rest, leaving the streets panting and Dives-like. But London did not sleep. Far from it. The taxi-bee still levied its toll from the various flowers of both sexes, and the hansom cab walked disconsolately in quest of late fares. The theatre was shut, it is true, but people still walked along the dusty pavement as if they were going somewhere on purpose, and elegantly attired ladies patrolled Piccadilly and Leicester Square, where paradoxically enough the gates of a convent adjoin those of a music-hall. The ladies were not nuns. In the back street, almost next door, if I may say so, to the convent, five men, "woodbine" in mouth, hands in pockets, caps placed jauntily over left or right ears, according to individual taste, walked silently and not very quickly towards the darker back streets. They did not wear bell-shaped trousers, which had buttons sewn down the seam; nor did their jackets have the peculiar

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shape as cut by the East End commercial tailor. Their boots, to be sure, were hobnailed, and their beards were in various stages of growth. Suddenly one of them took his hands out of his pockets and fumbled at his waist for a moment. "'Ere 'e comes," he said. His belt, a thick leather thing studded with brass and heavy nickel clasps, dangled in his hand. The four other men followed his example as they saw a man nearing them from a side street. Simultaneously they moved into the shadow and waited. The man reached them and the five leaped out on him together, crashing him to the ground and jumping on him with their hobnailed boots. In falling the man gave a cry for help, and in five minutes his unconscious form was discovered alone by a policeman. Need I say that the men were hooligans?

Again it was dark. The two commissaries de police walked down the Boulevard and turned into the Rue St. Honoré, leaving the Boulevard empty. The moon cast broad shadows over the doorway, and shone on a picture of peace and order and silence. The silence was broken. A man in evening dress, with a heavy watch-chain, hurried along the pavement, intent on getting home—perhaps. As he passed the deeply shadowed doorway of a large house, he was suddenly seized from behind, and a knife sank deep into him before he could utter a sound. Two men searched his pockets, took his watch and chain and gold studs, rolled him into the

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shadow, and walked silently away. Need I say that they were Apaches—Hooligans?

Again it is dark. This time it is Sunday evening. The buildings in the quad are lighted up and the sweet strains of a female voice float out into the quiet air accompanied by a piano. The moon shines down upon the motionless trees, and shows up the flowers quietly sleeping in their beds. The gargoyles, motionless and glistening, are thrown into strong relief, and the bursts of applause show with what delight the singer is heard. Suddenly, however, a band of men rush down from one of the staircases, and burst into the quiet quad, yelling and shouting. It is true that they wear pumps more or less expensive, that their clothes are beautifully waisted, their trousers wonderfully creased, their waistcoats of strange and varied hues, as also their socks, their hair groomed and well looked after, that they are, in fact, undergraduates. The voice of the singer is drowned. Cat-calls are made, "*à qui mieux, mieux!*" Strident and raucous voices give a fair imitation of a wild Indian human sacrifice. Pandemonium arises, and it is impossible for the singer to continue. Need I say that they are hooligans?

The coster, brass-buttoned and belted, who will not fight one man unless he himself is backed up by at least four others; the French *voyou*, the Apache, who does not do business unless accompanied by an accomplice and a knife, are, as everybody admits, a subject of loathing for all

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honest men. But it is very painful that there should undoubtedly exist specimens equally objectionable in the University. For one glorious moment I thought that it was not true, that there were no such things as hooligans at Oxford, that the high spirits that sometimes overflow so objectionably did not amount to hooliganism. I thought that they could escape the accusation on the plea "Boys will be boys." But I was brought up all standing by the thought that undergraduates were no longer boys, that they had sloughed off that when they had left their public schools and caught the four something train from Paddington to Oxford, full-blown men, Oxford men. And so, as it is an obvious impossibility to acquit them on that basis, I am reluctantly compelled to face the question of hooligans in Oxford.

It is a singularly painful question, and one which I am glad to say would be considered absolutely without foundation by many people. These people, however, have never come up to find out, and merely think so because their point of view is the old archaic one which makes them still look upon Oxford as a seat of learning, which phrase conjures up pictures of gowns and parchments and bearded scholars. Oxford is, of course, a seat of learning, but we imbibe other knowledge than that obtained from parchments—which is where the hooligan comes in. Everybody knows that at every University there is bound to be a certain amount of ragging. But ragging is vastly different from hooliganism. Ragging, indeed, is not merely

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permissible, but expected, and every allowance is made for it. But there are men who abuse this broad-mindedness on the part of the powers that be, and their ragging degenerates into hooliganism, pure and simple.

It is usually the man who hasn't got sufficient brains to rag artistically, who hasn't got sufficient imagination to conceive the glorious possibilities which the men of keener perception notice instinctively, who has to satisfy his animal spirits and exuberance by acts of hooliganism. Most often, too, this objectionable type of man is a hanger-on, a man who is not considered good enough to be invited to dinners and bridges, but who somehow manages to creep in afterwards when there are wine and tobacco going, to the very great annoyance of most of the guests, and who guzzles far more than he can hold, and who, finally, before being man-handled and ejected, lets himself go, and says and does the most objectionable things. Unfortunately, this kind of gentleman—who, by the way, is very often destined for the Church—bears a charmed life. He it is who spoils everything and is the cause of all the discredit, but it is never he who gets caught and sent down. Somehow or other he is always out of the way when the trouble comes, but it is not due to his own astuteness. He, indeed, is never in a condition to be astute. It is just luck. For instance, the manager of a theatre is rabid, and the curtain is hurriedly brought down, while numerous ejections are taking place in the

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auditorium owing to the persistent vulgarity and brutality of certain of the audience. Although twenty may be propped outside, you are safe in giving odds that the hooligans who are the cause of the trouble will not get caught either inside or outside the theatre. The more tolerant among us, or, to put it plainly, the more frightened, wag our heads and refuse to take any steps, saying: "After all, it is human nature." It *is* human nature of a sort, but what a sort!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE SHADOW OF COMMEM.

THE last morning of the Easter Vacation was bright and sunny. The undergraduate was duly wakened about eight-thirty by the arrival of tea. Reaching out a sleepy arm he drank it, turned over and slept again. An hour later he dreamed suddenly that he was walking up and down the lawn in pouring rain. It was too realistic for further sleep, and he woke with a start to find his sister gently squeezing a cold sponge over his face and neck.

"Wake up, you rotter!" she said when he opened his eyes. "Get up, you mere undergraduate!"

"Oh, chuck it!" cried the man angrily. "Why the deuce can't you leave me alone? It's my last morning, and I shall have to do chapels for the next two months."

"Poor dear! How unkind you are! If it's so awful, why did you ever go up?"

"Oh, go away."

"Will you promise to get up if I do?" asked the girl, threatening him with the sponge.

"Oh, all right."

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The sister retired with the usual volley of sarcasms. The undergraduate, too wet and uncomfortable to stay in bed, turned out, tubbed, dressed, and eventually appeared at the deserted breakfast table. As he was filling his pipe his sister entered.

"Feel better?" she asked.

"I've got an awful hump to-day, so if you start ragging," he answered, "my temper will be chaotic."

His sister, seeing that he spoke seriously, became serious. She sat down on the table and swung her legs.

"Don't you want to go up?" she said.

"Of course I'm keen to go up, but all the same I've put in a priceless vac., one way and another."

"Yes, we have had some fun, haven't we?"

"Rather. That dance last week was great. Miss Trevelyan is a school pal of yours, isn't she?" asked the undergraduate.

"That's a bright question. I've told you so three times already. By the way, she's coming to lunch to-day."

The girl made this remark quite casually, but the sisterly lynx eye never left his face.

"Is she?" her brother's voice was equally casual and devoid of interest.

The sister, however, was satisfied. "He overdid that," she thought.

"Frightful bore, isn't it?" she asked.

"Frightful," said the undergraduate. "Come and have a walk round."

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"Right."

Slipping on overcoats, they went down the wide front steps of the old house. The man's eye wandered round the drive and front lawn affectionately. They turned to the left, and cutting through the shrubbery, still dripping with dew, came out by the stables. A red-faced stableman was noisily grooming a horse.

"Mornin', sir," he said, seeing them. "Mornin', miss. Goin' back to-day, sir?"

"Yes, worse luck," said the undergraduate, patting the horse's neck, and planting a kiss on his soft nuzzling nose.

"Hope you'll have a good time, sir."

"Oh, you needn't worry about that, Morgan," said the girl. "He never does anything else."

"Well, I pulled off the Law Prelim. first shot, anyhow."

"Yes, beastly fluke," said the girl. "Let's go and have a hundred up."

Leaving the hissing groom, they re-entered the house, and went into the billiard-room, which looked out on the kitchen garden.

"I'll give you twenty," said the undergraduate condescendingly.

"All right. I bet you a shilling I win," snorted the girl.

"Certainly," he said, breaking and leaving a double baulk.

"Very hot," said his sister. She carefully chalked the cue, and flying all round the table brought off a cannon.

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"Beastly fluke!" said the undergraduate.

"Rot, I tried for it," said the girl, missing a certainty.

"I say, what time is Miss Trevelyan coming?" asked the Oxford man.

"Oh, some time before lunch. I asked her to come early."

The undergraduate pulled out his watch. "Well, it's eleven now," he said.

"She may be here any moment, then," said the girl in the middle of a nice fifteen.

"Look here," said the man, with his back to her. "When she comes I wish you wouldn't hang round, do you mind, for a bit?"

"I thought you said she was a frightful bore," said the sister, with a smile.

"So she is, but if it is all the same to you, I want to have a little talk to her about er—stamps."

"Stamps!" The girl burst out laughing.

"Yes, I find them rather interesting," said the undergraduate gravely.

The door burst open and Dorothy Trevelyan entered, full of life and enthusiasm.

"Hullo, playing pills? I thought you would be. Anything else is too violent for Oxford." She flung off her hat and coat and sat down by the fire. "Finish your game and I'll take you on," she said. "By Jove, it is cold!"

"Oh, Dorothy, Jack says he wants to talk to you about stamps." She carefully did not see his frantic gestures and mouthings, but went calmly

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on. "He says he finds them very interesting and doesn't want me to hang round. So I'll come back in half an hour."

With a huge grin she put back her cue and carefully shut the door behind her.

"What on earth does she mean?" asked Dorothy of the uncomfortable undergraduate. "I don't collect stamps."

"Oh, I just told her that to get her out of the way. She's not very subtle." He moved over to the fire-place. "I'm going up to-day, you know," he said meaningly.

"Yes, I know. Well—she's out of the way. What do you want to see me about?"

The undergraduate knocked out his pipe, carefully polished it against the side of his nose and put it in his pocket. He then spoke.

"Well, look here, I've so far put in a topping time and I've fallen in love with you. But you're not the only one I fell in love with. There were three others and they all refused me."

"You're rather like Bruce's spider," said Dorothy, with a laugh. "Or Smith-Piggot," she added.

"No, it's not like that," said Jack, "but you see it gives one a certain amount of kudos to be able to say that one proposed and was accepted several times in the vac. It comes in awfully useful in Commem. week, and when I tell them, they'll certainly elect me a Steward of the Ball Committee."

"Oh! so you're just clutching at the drowning

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straw, eh? I see. It's a high compliment, I'm sure."

"No, but really," said the Oxford man sitting on the arm of her chair, and dropping his voice, "I do like you awfully, you're so—so ripping, and—and——"

Dorothy laughed.

"Isn't that rather uncomfortable?" she asked.

"No, I like it here," said the man. "What do you say?"

"You haven't asked me anything yet," said Dorothy. "You've merely told me that three girls have refused you, and that I'm ripping and—and——" she laughed.

"Well, isn't that enough? What else can I say? You know the position."

"And you an *Oxford* man! You ought to go on one knee, pour out your heart, and wind up by asking me to be your wife."

"I'm afraid you don't quite understand," he said. "I don't want you to be my wife. I merely want you to accept my proposal."

"Why don't you start proposing then?"

The Oxford man rose, smoothed his hair, straightened his tie, and cleared his throat.

"Don't forget the one knee business," said Dorothy.

"Must I? It'll ruin my crease," he said ruefully.

"Blow your crease! Of course you must," insisted Dorothy.

"Oh, all right then," the undergraduate growled.

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He pulled the trouser of his right leg about six inches and knelt.

"I like you. You're all right. Will you—damn!"

He sprang up and rushed at his sister who had quietly opened the door and was peeping in with a large smile. She fled like a hare.

Dorothy burst out laughing. The undergraduate slammed the door and came back.

"She spoilt it," he said. "I was just getting into my stride. Take it as said. Will you—er—accept my offer?"

"No, thanks," said Dorothy. "This is my close season for being engaged."

"Oh, but look here——"

"No is my last word," laughed Dorothy.

"My luck is dead out," said Jack. "I shan't stay up for Commem!"

"Not even if I'm there?" asked Dorothy.

"Will you be?" said Jack eagerly.

"Not if you don't invite me." Dorothy raised one eyebrow at him.

"I invite you now," said Jack.

"Sportsman!" said the girl.

And so Jack stayed up after all.

CHAPTER XXIX.

COMING UP.

JULY, August, and September have slipped off the calendar in exactly the same way as do the leaves in autumn—regretted, but quickly forgotten. The new year of Oxford life, with its work and play, endeavours and triumphs, fills one with enthusiasm, sweeping away regret, if any there be, for the past delights of the long vacation. And indeed the October term, which begins the undergraduate year, is a peculiarly attractive one. To the veteran in whose mind the dread thought of schools looms grim and fateful on a fast approaching horizon, it is the beginning of the end, the last year in which, in the intervals of soaking himself with the atmosphere of the most splendid place on earth, to put the final polish on his two years' work. To other veterans who, the previous summer, have come out smiling Odol-ly from the giant struggle with the degree givers, and who are taking an extra year, it is the last lap in which to put in a glorious time all round. Those who begin their second year find it a time of pride not unmingled with wonder at the bursting feeling of being a

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second year man and the "What—will—the—bally—freshers—be—like—I—wonder—eh?" sort of idea. To the fresher it is the beginning of everything. He is at last a man—at least an Oxford man—though in many cases a courtesy title. At least it is the semblance of manhood and that is as good. Conceive him in the train overflowing with excitement, hot at the thought of blues and firsts, cold at the idea of "dropping bricks" with a hideous thud, glad at having given a last peck to the sisterly cheek, and feeling at the same time a shiver of apprehension at the thought that apron-strings are now definitely broken beyond all stitching. He goes away, perhaps a rosy-cheeked lad, fresh and unspoilt by any personal contact with that rough thing called life, and returns, oh ye gods! big with bored cynicism and mouthing undigested epigrams. A great life, my masters.

Truly the dining-car train is an education, a feast of mirth. Obsequious porters handle fifty things at once, never making any mistake as to the fifty owners who drop the *douceur* into their ready palms with an air as who should say, "My left hand is not at all concerned with that which dispenses its mate." The fresher, humbly watching the third year man, admiring his man of the world air, offers up to him his corner seat.

To some, during the Vacation, has happened that thing which is perhaps the greatest moment in all their lives, that thing which places them above all mundane considerations, which makes

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them tread on air, which transforms the rushing, pushing, shrieking deafening station into a tranquil paradise, lulled by gentle zephyrs and sweet music and which lasts perhaps one term—never more. To these love has come—and *she* is seeing him off at the station. He must leave her for eight long weeks—oh, cruel fate, oh hideous necessity! And so he hides behind the ticket office on number one platform to have a last, long, lingering look into her dear eyes, a last long kiss, oh joy, oh sorrow, and then their hands slowly unclasping, she, the goddess, dries her tears and, catching the penny 'bus at the corner, sits between a beer swilling and smelling navvy and a greasy descendant of patriarchs, and returns to mama and the common round, the daily task, to pour out her soul daily on cream wove paper at one and two the packet from the little stationer round the corner, where they sell gum and bootlaces among other things; while he, disconsolate, finds a carriage, lights a pipe, gazes unseeing on the rush and scurry till the inevitable friend jumps in, when he engages in bright conversation as to the possibilities of the coming term.

Further along the platform the charming nasal twang buying many papers proclaims the American. They come from the four winds of Heaven—the Rhodes money permits, with due economy during term, of explorations in foreign climates, of first-class fares on steamers and other little necessities—at the appointed hour

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to the Paddington platform, spluttering smatterings of foreign tongues picked up in their wanderings in far-off and Baedekered countries. With him travels the representative of the Fatherland, still broken as to English, fresh from aviation competitions, resplendent with a new and cherished cut upon his face—to the ordinary Englishman the unsightly result of a tavern brawl, to him, however, a possession without price, more dear than anything on earth. Broad-shouldered, sun-tanned colonials get together and discuss sailings and mails. Princes and others—who knows?—from the land where men can raise a thirst, and, perhaps not less important, where there is a dearth of commandments, shining darkly from behind a white collar, make their way with dignity into first-class carriages; invaders of Port Arthur and devotees of harikiri (?) all these and more.

The American "stodent" has packed his grip and bid farewell to the *p'tite ame* at the Gare du Nord with a cheery word and promises of a quick return; the Teuton has slobbered over and with his *mädchen*; and we, the phlegmatic Britishers, have said good-bye in the old, old way, and Oxford is again up.

CHAPTER XXX.

CORNSTALKING.

IT was half-past eight in the evening. Four men came down the narrow staircase doing their best to keep arm in arm. From the room above came the sounds of a piano and the heavy thud of feet dancing in brogues. The four men sang, or rather shouted, the words of the tune and went across the quad. They were rowing men these four, and had adjourned from the Saturday night port and oranges to cool down after an energetic hour's dancing.

"Let's do a Cornstagger," said Rowlands.

"Righto, I'm all in favour of it in summer term," said another of the four, by name Harris. "The Teuton musicianers will probably be about."

Kipps snorted. He was called Kipps because he wasn't by any means a simple soul. But he knew something about music. "I love that German band as a brother, I do," he said.

They scrambled through the lodge gate, linked up arms and made their way by the Martyrs' Memorial.

"Have you ever heard of a thing called a cigar?" said Morris, the fourth man.

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The three jumped on him.

"Shut up, you brute."

"Get thee behind me, devil's pup."

"Oh, dear, look at this coming along!" said Rowlands.

"Eyes in the boat," said Morris.

Two very pretty girls were walking towards them, trying hard to look unself-conscious.

Morris's warning was unheeded, and eight eyes concentrated on the fair innocent maidens. Their innocence was not, however, lasting. Two hot winks burnt up the four oarsmen, and they collapsed into loud laughter as they went by.

"Oh, Oxford, my Oxford!" gasped Harris.

"What you might call a tropical pair," said Kipps. "Watch it!"

A motor horn pumped behind them and they wheeled on to the path. The motor panted past and they returned to the road. They crossed by Martyrs' and went on towards Carfax, keeping up a running fire of amused and amusing personalities about the various passers-by who caught their attention. The shops were all lighted, and the streets crowded, although the theatre had begun long ago. In the distance the band was playing somewhere, probably in the High.

Rowlands stopped at Hills and Saunders. "Let's go in and have a look round."

With one movement they wheeled into the shop, nodded to the girls behind the counter, and made their way into the back part where ranged on

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stands are kept all the college groups, Ouds photos, club groups, and rowing groups. The four routed about until they found their own college pictures. Having admired these they said good evening to the little bearded man, nodded cheerily to the girls again, and strode out, having ordered nothing.

"I owe those shurds about three quid," said Kipps reflectively.

"Doesn't matter," said Harris. "They don't worry you."

"Glad to hear it," said Morris. "I've got a hairy bill there too."

"'Ere, yar, sir. *Star*, final, *Star*, final."

The four took no notice of the undersized paper boy.

"*Review*, my lord? *Oxford Review*?" The boy followed them, thrusting a black hand into their faces.

"No, thank you very much. *No!*" said Rowlands.

The boy dropped away muttering, and put his fingers to his nose.

They turned into the High. Some distance down, at the corner of Alfred Street, the band, a collection of cheery-faced, well-nourished Faderlanders, stood round their music rests and made melody with zest and feeling. One of them gave up playing, emptied out his brass instrument, took a shell out of his pocket, and began to make a collection. The crowd of townees and undergraduates who stood round either paid up nobly

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or shuffled off. Some of the undergraduates tried their easy German on him, and poured out guttural insults and terms of reproach such as one picks up by accident. The man smiled cheerfully, held out his shell and pocketed the coppers without being in the least annoyed.

The four men came up. The German moved along and rattled the shell suggestively.

"Dites donc, Monsieur le musicien, fous-moi le camp avec votre sacré—what's the word for shell?" asked Kipps.

"Ach, Herr liebe Gott!" said Harris. "Nein, nein!"

Morris put two coppers in the shell.

"Verfluchter geschweinhund!" he said. "Donnerwetter!"

The man showed all his teeth in one devastating grin and passed on.

"I loathe standing about in a beastly crowd," said Rowlands. "Let's wander on."

So they wandered on down the High. It was a beautiful night, and the skyline looking towards Magdalen was a most perfect sight in the soft evening light. By Teddy Hall they turned out of it and went down the winding, narrow lane past New College into the Broad.

Morris suddenly quickened his pace. "Progs!" he exclaimed.

"Where?" said Kipps.

"Coming down the Broad."

They all looked along the street, and there about a hundred yards away was the proctor with

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his flowing gown and little white bibs, accompanied by three "bullers."

The four men hurried across the street still arm in arm, and went down Parks Road at the back of St. John's and Trinity gardens. Looking back they saw the proctor go on down Holywell.

"Thank goodness!" said Morris. "I'm all against sprinting after a trained meal."

"Very bad for er—liver," said Rowlands, "*and* the temper!"

"How about looking into Lover's Lane," suggested Kipps, "to see if there's anything doing?"

The other laughed. "Not a bad wheeze," said Morris, "but I've got some work to do to-night."

"Oh work!" said Rowlands. "Go and drown it. Work's off in training."

Lovers' Lane was very dark. Trees overhung and joined together from either side, and they passed one or two townees "walking out" with their "fiascoes."

"This is rot," said Harris. "Let's get out into the cool air."

They came into the street opposite the pillar box let into the wall. A servant, neatly dressed in cap and apron, was putting letters in. The four men instantly told each other in loud voices to keep their eyes in the boat. And the servant walked back to her house. They followed making flattering comments about her face, which they could not see, and her walk, which they decided was queenly. The servant turned in at a wide gate, shooting out a little laugh over her shoulder,

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and two seconds later appeared at an open window on the ground floor. Without a moment's hesitation, the four men marched in at the gate and up to the window. The servant, a little nervous, backed away. So with their elbows on the window ledge they chaffed her and implored her for a kiss, just one all round. The room inside was not lighted, and suddenly there shot out a panful of water. Kipps and Morris jumped away in time, but the other two got it full in their faces. With shrieks of laughter they dried themselves and retired worsted, and hailed a passing hansom with shouts of triumph. They leapt in, and all singing the waltz air together drove back in style to college.

CHAPTER XXXI.

BROADWAY IN THE HIGH.

JACK FELTHROPP was just about to begin breakfast. If Eight's had not been so near at hand the chances are that he would have been found with elaborately parted hair in a cheery dressing-gown. Training, however, knows no dressing-gowns, and so he was fully clothed and in his right mind, when, as he was in the act of helping himself to fish, the door was flung open and there entered a tall, blue-eyed, well-built man.

"Say, Jack," he said, "have you got a date this morning?"

"Got a date?—Oh!" answered Jack with a smile. "No, I'm open for anything this morning."

"Waal, see here," went on his friend. "There's an American lady *and* her two daughters coming here—sort of cousins—and I've got to do the Baedeker stunt. Will you help?"

"What! again?" cried Felthropp. "Great Scott, Turnips, you seem to know the whole of America."

Turnips—the nickname had been given because of the American's vegetarian surname—laughed.

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"Why," he said, "I've only shown six of them round this term. They are stopping in to lunch this morning here, and it's up to you to complete the party."

"Thanks. Of course I'll come, but I must rush away immediately after for rowing."

"All right. They are calling for me at ten, so will you come right down to my room?"

"Righto," said Jack.

"Good boy," said Turnips, hurrying out again.

Jack finished his breakfast, eyed his pipe longingly, but turned his back on it and strolled down into the sun, out through the lodge and into the Giler. The usual stream of men doomed to ten o'clock lectures had not yet begun to flow, but a few gowns fluttered by on bicycles. Felthropp crossed over by the Martyrs' Memorial, went in to Hatt's—he always went to Hatt's instead of the other place at the corner, because the man who shaved one was most amusing on the subject of the theatre—and after the operation returned to the college.

The lodge was full of men, smoking and talking and reading the afternoon's sporting fixtures posted there. Jack assured himself that he was wanted at the river at two o'clock, and at about five minutes to ten went through to the American's rooms. He found Turnips agitatedly tidying things up, shifting papers and books from one place to another, aimlessly touching things and trying to put straight pictures which were not on a slant. Jack watched him for some moments

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with a smile. "Which one is it?" he asked finally.

"Just *what* do you mean?" asked Turnips stopping.

"You look so worried that I want to know which is to be the future Mrs. Turnips," laughed Jack.

Turnips roared with laughter.

"By Heck!" he said, "that's a real British remark. Don't you straighten things up when you've got friends around!"

"Yes," replied Jack, "but not like that. You looked as if——"

A knock at the door cut his remark in half.

Turnips jumped.

"Come right in!" he called out.

The door opened and the scout showed in a fat, short, good-looking woman followed by two girls, very pretty, and not at all shy.

"Why, Frank!" burst out the mother, hurrying forward with outstretched hands. "I'm real glad to see you. Are these your rooms? *My!* ain't they nice, poifectly charming!"

"This is bully!" said Turnips, shaking hands all round, beaming and delighted. "But, say! Mrs. Hunter, I want you to meet my friend Mr. Felthropp. Jack, Mrs. Hunter, Miss Hunter, and Miss Gwen Hunter."

"How do you do?" said Jack, bowing.

"I'm real pleased to meet you, Mr. Felthropp," smiled Mrs. Hunter.

"It's a great pleasure," said Miss Hunter.

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"Charmed to know you," said Miss Gwen.

"Jack is going to help me show you around, Mrs. Hunter," explained Turnips.

"Now that's very nice of you, Mr. Felthropp. We've only got to-day to do Oxford in," said Mrs. Hunter.

"Waal, I guess we can show you most everything," said Turnips.

"Shall we start right in, then?" suggested Miss Gwen.

"I've ordered lunch here at one, so I suggest that we take you over the college first, then go down to the Haouse——"

"What's the Haouse?" asked Gwen.

"Christ Church," said Jack, explaining the reasons to her.

"And then on to Magdalen and New College," went on Turnips. "And this afternoon we'll show you some of the river in a punt."

"Come right along then," said Miss Hunter.

"But you're not going out in those dancing shoes?" cried Mrs. Hunter.

Jack and Turnips smiled.

"Oh, we always go out in these," said Jack.

"Gee!" said Miss Gwen.

"How about you, Frank?" asked Miss Hunter.

"Oh, I'm a right through Oxford man now," laughed Turnips. "Come on." He opened the door, and they filed down into the quad.

Jack followed after the others with Miss Gwen. Turnips, who from frequent expeditions such as this, knew as much about Oxford as a guide book,

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rattled off dates and history and explanations by the yard as they went over the college and the library and the gardens. Jack chipped in a word from time to time when Turnips paused for breath, but his ignorance of the history of the place was monumental, so he confined himself to the present day inhabitants, and amused the girls with stories, much expurgated, of binges and twenty-firsters.

When they had done the college, they started out for the House, along the Corn and through Carfax. It was a market day, and the streets were crowded with men in broad hats and leg-gings. Herds of bulls and flocks of sheep were driven through, and the old tram-cars jogged along undisturbed, to the intense amusement of the Americans.

"Can you ride free on that?" asked Miss Gwen.

"Oh, no," said Jack. "They charge you anything from a halfpenny upwards."

"A halfpenny? Is that five cents?" asked the girl. "I can't figure out your English money. It gets me every time. Say, but what's this place in front just being built?"

"Oh, that's the House, Christ Church," said Jack. "It's hundreds of years old, you know."

"It looks so new I thought they were just finishing it. But my!" exclaimed Miss Gwen. "It's real fine. Say, mamma, couldn't we get a gateway like that for our Newport house?"

Momma evidently didn't quite appreciate the idea, for she merely smiled and went through

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into Tom quad. Turnips immediately started another burst of facts and figures.

Miss Gwen was not so interested in them. She stuck to Jack and asked about the undergraduates.

"Say, Mr. Felthropp," she said, as they went up the worn stone steps to the dining-hall, "when do you have your junior proms?"

"Junior proms?" queried Jack. "Oh, I remember, we call them merely college balls. Well, they happen in Commem. week, that is at the end of this term."

The little old man at the door ushered them into the hall. Turnips led the party towards the fireplace and explained some of the portraits.

"Gee!" said Miss Gwen. "Do all you boys feed here?"

"Only the House men," corrected Jack.

"I'm sure I beg your pardon," said Miss Gwen. "Our side we always call them boys. I should just love to have dinner here. Could you fix it for to-night?"

"I'm afraid not," said Jack. "You see in the first place I'm not a House man, and then ladies aren't allowed in hall."

Miss Hunter turned to her sister with a laugh. "Say, Gwen, wouldn't you just *love* to have some of those fancy pictures to put in our hall?"

"Sure!" said Miss Gwen.

Jack was beginning to get a bit "fed" with architecture, he preferred the humanities. Gwen was more than pretty.

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"I say," he said quietly, looking at her eye to eye. "Shall we—er—lose ourselves and go on the river?"

"Fine!" said Gwen, shooting a glance at the others.

"Splendid!" said Jack. The party went out of the hall and down again to see the cathedral. Jack kept Gwen behind in a technical explanation of the ceiling until, out of the tail of his eye, he saw the others disappear into the cathedral. "Come on, now."

Gwen laughed and followed. Together they cut down through the ghastly new buildings and hurried down Broad Walk to the barges.

"Here we are," said Jack. "This is great!"

"Is this your river?" asked Gwen. "What a dinky little thing. What funny boats. How do you work them?"

"Like this," said Jack, handing her into a punt. He rolled up his sleeves and took up the punt pole.

"Gee!" said Gwen, watching him in amazement. "What's it called, anyway?"

"Punting," said Jack. "I say, I'm awfully glad you've come."

"Why?" asked Gwen.

Jack told her for the next hour while he punted quietly down the Cher. Gwen enjoyed being told much better than she liked the river, so Jack tied the boat up in a quiet spot he knew of, screened from prying eyes by friendly bushes, and sat down by her side.

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"Have you ever—er—kissed?" asked Jack suddenly.

Gwen smiled. "Why, yes!" she said.

"Well, how about it now?" said Jack.

"I guess it's up to you," said Gwen.

Jack made it so.

"Where *have* you been?" asked Mrs. Hunter half an hour later, when Gwen and Jack came in and found lunch waiting.

"We lost you in the House somewhere," said Jack, "and as we couldn't find you anywhere, I took it upon myself to show Miss Gwen something of the undergraduate side of Oxford."

"Now that was real kind of you, Mr. Felthropp," said Mrs. Hunter. "Gwen, dear, I hope you're very grateful."

"Sure, mother," said Gwen, with a quick glance at Jack.

"And now for lunch," said Turnips.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A HARD MORNING'S WORK.

IT was ten o'clock. A hundred clocks with as many different voices insisted on the fact in an orgy of melody for a period of about five minutes—they always make it a point of honour never to be exactly alike.

Jack Felthropp and his friend Crows with his eternal terrier, a fat animal with a gentle interest in rat holes, ran their bicycles into the little lean-to shed by the side of Tims's boat-house. The sky was without cloud, and the sun shone hotly, steadily, gloriously. The two had breakfasted together, and had arrived at the conclusion that although they each felt compelled to do a hard morning's work, the digs were too frowsty—the word was Jack's—the college gardens too American, and that in fact a quiet backwater or the shelter of some convenient bush by the bank was the only possible place where they could really grind.

Tossing their books into the waiting punt, which had more than its fair share of cushions,

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the two men turned her nose down stream, the dog jumped aboard, and together they gently poled down towards the Rollers.

"I say Jack," said Crows, "I've cut two lekkers this morning, so let's tie up pretty soon. I simply *must* work."

"Righto," answered Felthropp. "I'm out for work too. I've got to read up a confounded essay. Let's take her hard down to the New College place. There's heaps of sun, and if *you* want to sit in the shade, we can shove your end under a bush."

The banks slipped quickly past as the two men put their backs into it. The silence was complete but for the plunk of the poles as they dropped to the bottom, and the swish of the water on their recovery. A rat saw them coming and tumbled off the bank with a flop. The dog sprang up and barked angrily, only to sit down again and close his eyes as they shot past. The ladies' boat-house dropped behind, and the bathing-place at last came in sight as they rounded the final bend of the Parks. Through the trees the two caught a glimpse of some girls crossing the Rollers, and the sound of their voices could be heard across the water.

"I say," said Jack casually, "it wouldn't be a bad idea if we crossed the Rollers now and worked a bit lower down, by Magdalen somewhere, what do you think?"

Crows laughed. "But look here, how about work!"

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"It only means another ten minutes," urged Jack, poling hard.

"Oh, all right, and anyway it's simply heaven out here," said Crows yielding.

By the time the Rollers were reached the other boat had disappeared. They ran the punt over. Jack had forgotten to bring any money, so, as usual, Crows paid, and once more they poled quickly along.

"Now then, Crows," said Jack as they came in sight of the girls, "a nice little spurt and lots of style, please. If you lose your pole *this* time there'll be a row!"

Crows grunted. "You needn't always be rubbing that in," he said.

With carefully averted eyes which, oddly enough, took in every detail of the two girls, Jack and Crows raced past, slacking off the spurt when they got about eight lengths in front.

"No earthly!" said Jack.

"Are they ever?" jerked out Crows, very puffed—he was ever a slacker.

"May as well tie up here," said Jack resignedly.

"Good for you," agreed Crows.

They stopped the punt half in and half out of the sun, dug in the poles and tied her up. By the time the girls went by in the other boat, Crows was comfortably arranged in the shade with the dog at his side, deep in the delights of Gaius. Felthropp having started a big briar, of whose grain he was very proud, was browning at the

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other end of the punt, at full length in the sun, hard at work on the essay.

The girls rounded the next bend. No other craft was in sight or sound. A gentle breeze sprang up, the leaves whispered to each other overhead ; the river flowed on gently. A family of water rats came out, apparently to go for a little walk, but at sight of the terrier changed their minds and dived hurriedly. Two blackbirds saw the incident and darted away shrieking with laughter.

Crows looked up suddenly. "I say, Jack, will you feed with me this morning?"

Jack made no answer. His rudeness was inexcusable, unless of course he was the sacrifice on the altar of Schools, and so deep in his work that he did not hear. Crows rather doubted this. He turned quietly over, sat up with exaggerated care and bent so that he could see Jack's face. To all appearances Jack *was* a sacrifice. No smoke, however, came from his pipe, so Crows rocked the punt violently.

"Back her down all!" said Jack, sitting up quickly and blinking.

"You blighter!" laughed Crows. "Thought you were out for work!"

"Dash it, man," said Jack annoyed. "I was—thinking."

"Did you hear my remark?" asked Crows,

"Of course I did!" snapped Felthropp.

"Well, will you?"

"Will I what?"

"Lunch with me?" said Crows.

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"Of course I will," said Jack. "I say, look here. It's too hot to work. I'm all in favour of a bathe first. What do you say?"

"Can't swim," said Crows sadly. "Got a heart."

"Do you mind if I do?"

"Rather not!"

"Righto. It'll cool me down and I shall be able to work much better after it."

"H'm! Perhaps." Crows got to his feet and picked out his pole. "However, I'll take you back."

Felthropp lit his pipe again while Crows gently—he was ever gentle—poled back to the Rollers. Ten minutes later Jack's clothes made a little pile on the grass, and he took a running header into the river.

Crows, with about six cushions round and under him, a straw hat tilted over his eyes and a cigarette in his mouth, lazily watched him. The dog, for once thoroughly awake, barked and snapped as Jack came out gleaming, his hair all over his face, and spluttering water everywhere.

"This is great!" he called out.

"*You* haven't a heart, lucky devil!" answered Crows.

Jack didn't wait to answer. He was in the river again giving an excellent imitation of a water rat as he turned over and swam under water to the farther bank, coming up gasping and making grampus noises at the slippery wooden steps.

For half an hour Crows smoked and watched his friend dive from the various spring-boards, do

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monkey tricks from the hanging ropes, and, as he delightfully put it, "get cool." Then he filled his pipe for him as Jack came up clad in a towel, glowing with his exertions.

"I don't know whether you know it," said Crows passing the pipe and matches, "but I lunch at one."

"What do you mean?" asked Jack thickly from between the entanglements of a refractory shirt.

"Well, it's very nearly half-past twelve and we've got to get back to Tims's."

"Oh, that's all right," said Jack, lighting his pipe. "I'll take you up in fifteen minutes and we shall just get in comfortably." He went over to the little hut where there is a decaying looking-glass, and a box full of doubtful combs under the watch and ward of an old man who has evidently seen better days, but who prefers honest work to proud penury. Replying cheerily to the old man's remarks about the temperature of the water, Jack made an elaborate parting in his wet hair, paid him, and returned to the punt.

"How about all that cramming we were going to get through?" suggested Crows, with a smile of perfect content.

"Work! Oh, well!" said Jack, punting lustily up stream. "If it's a glorious day again to-morrow we'll come and really put in a strenuous morning. No bathing, no talking, just solid work."

"Well, if you think to-day is an exception," laughed Crows, "I should like to know what the rule is."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

“UP IN THE MORNING EARLY.”

ONCE upon a time, though this is *not* a fairy tale, there was a vice-president of a certain college who was very rigid on the question of chapels. This was rather rough on the undergraduates, as his forerunner had been of an easy disposition whom it was not difficult to wheedle. But he was short-sighted and nervous, and therein lies the crux of the matter. At this particular college the number of chapels to be done was fixed in the book of rules—aptly known as the Blue Liar and sometimes referred to as a well-known half-penny paper—at thirty per term. To have to turn out of bed at seven-thirty on cold, wet mornings thirty times during term is, to put it mildly, unpleasant; and it is not a matter of any surprise that many undergraduates fail to comply with this demand. The result is that towards the end of term they are compelled to do two a day to make up the necessary total, unless they can cajole the vice-president into giving them the deficit. But this vice-president was not to be cajoled, and a certain undergraduate

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was very "fed up" with the absurdity of losing a term simply because he had not complied with a futile regulation, and he did not stomach the idea of doing two chapels a day for the rest of term. There were thousands of things far more worth while. Accordingly he cast about in his mind for a really sound argument with which to get round the vice-president, but after much cogitation he drew a sad blank, and decided to make a sterling effort to turn out early the next morning, and subsequently throughout the week.

The next morning arrived, cheerless and wet. Bed was an excellent institution and chapels piffle. He slept again and breakfasted at nine o'clock in dressing-gown. That afternoon, however, he had been reading in the J.C.R. and was due to tea with a pal. When the time arrived he strolled down the stairs, and in the dark passage by the library ran against the short-sighted vice-president. After mutual apologies the vice-president continued on his way, but stopped again suddenly.

"Er—by the way," he said, "when is your case coming on in the Chancellor's Court?"

"My case—?" queried the undergraduate, "I'm afraid I don't quite——"

"I don't suppose you will get off, but I should like to be present when it is tried. Let me know when it is coming on, will you?"

"Certainly." The undergraduate was staggered. Chancellor's Court! What on earth—?

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Oh, of course. The V.P. had mistaken him for someone else. Silly old chump. What a jest!

He strode away through the quad chuckling and went up the stairs to his friend's room. The usual hotters and things were duly eaten and pipes started when the undergraduate bethought him of the vice-president.

"I ran into the V.P. just now," he said, "and he evidently mistook me for someone else, because he asked me when I was going to appear for some crime or other in the Chancellor's Court."

"Wonder who it is?" said the friend. "You're as innocent as the dove, I suppose?"

"More so. And unfortunately," said the undergraduate, "I'm equally innocent of chapels—Great Scott!" A brainy idea had come to him.

"What's the row?"

"I say, by Jove, can't I turn this Chancellor's Court business into a means of getting some given me?"

"Don't see how," said the other.

"Well, the V.P.'s a nervy chap and apt to get flustered. If I can only worry him somehow about it, I can then catch him on the hop and nip in with a polite request for chapels, see?"

"H'm!" grunted the other. "Not a bad idea. How are you going to worry him?"

The undergraduate jumped to his feet. "Give me a lump of note-paper quick."

"You'll find it on the window," said the other without taking his feet off the mantel-piece.

The undergraduate crossed the room and took

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up the paper, headed with the college crest. He also borrowed a fountain pen and sat down at the table. "How about this?" he said, writing. "Mr. — presents his compliments to the Vice-President, and would be greatly obliged by an explanation of the foul insinuations made against his character by the Vice-President on Monday afternoon at four p.m., outside the library door."

The friend burst out laughing. "Bet you five bob you won't send that. My dear chap, you'd get the immediate chuck!"

"I think it's great!" laughed the undergraduate, and he read it aloud again.

"I should cut out foul insinuations if I were you."

"Yes, perhaps that is a bit thick. How about unpleasant?"

"That's more like it," laughed the other.

"Right, I'll alter it." The undergraduate did so. "He's bound to answer such a thing as that."

"*Then* what are you going to do?"

"Put on a long face, say how worried I was, didn't sleep a wink, thought I'd done something awful and generally pile it on. Then he'll simply have to apologize, and will have to give me my thirteen chapels to atone for his mistake."

"You cunning blighter. But I bet you don't pull it off. He's a devil for chapels."

"Bet you I do, and the whole bally lot too!" laughed the undergraduate.

The scout came in to remove the tea things.

"Just give that to the vice-president, will

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you?" said the undergraduate, giving him the letter.

"Right, sir." The scout crashed the cups and plates about, and at last removed them and himself.

The answer came next morning at breakfast. The undergraduate's friend was feeding with him, so he read it out :

"Dear Mr. —, I have received a letter from you which I am at a loss to understand. Will you come and see me about it this morning at any time convenient to yourself? (signed)—Vice-President."

"Now you're in for it," said the friend.

"Do I look pale and ill?" asked the undergraduate.

His friend laughed. "Frightfully!" he said. "When are you going to see him?"

"Now."

The undergraduate finished his coffee, put on a gown and went out. He hurried across the quad, up the stairs past the library to the vice-president's room, and tapped at his oak.

A muffled voice said, "Come in."

"Faint heart never won fair chapels," thought the undergraduate, and entered.

The vice-president was poking his fire. At sight of the writer of that curious letter he put it hastily down with a clatter and turned.

"Oh—er—good morning," he said. "Ha ! Ha !"

"Good morning, sir," said the undergraduate

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mournfully. "He always makes that 'ha ha' row when he's worried," he thought.

"Did you, er—did you write this—this letter?"

"I did," said the undergraduate with restrained emotion.

"Well, er—it surprised me considerably. Ha! ha! I confess I am unable to, er—to explain it. Is it a joke?"

"A joke!" echoed the undergraduate in a tone of horror and reproach.

"I'm sorry," said the vice-president quickly. "But perhaps you'll be good enough to explain."

"Now then, lay it on thick!" thought the undergraduate. "Well, sir," he said in a low distressed voice, "unfortunately for us both, I happened to collide with you outside the library yesterday, and you—you," he gulped at the thought of it, "accused me of some horrible thing, for which you said I was to be tried in the Chancellor's Court."

"Some horrible thing!" gasped the vice-president.

"That's caught him in the neck!" thought the undergraduate. "Yes, sir," he continued hurriedly. "I don't know what it is of which you think I'm guilty, but I can only assure you on my word of honour that I am as innocent as the babe unborn."

The vice-president opened his mouth. The undergraduate got there first. "Of course, sir," he continued, "this may be a small matter to

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you, but it was a great shock to me to think that I should even come under suspicion."

The vice-president was trying hard to remember what had really happened. It was evidently serious, he thought, because this man was deeply upset.

"That's worried him," thought the undergraduate. "Try again. It's been a great blow to me, sir," he went on, "and I haven't slept a wink all night, what with my career hanging in the balance and my parents——"

"Oh—er—yes, of course," interrupted the vice-president. "I remember now, and I'm sure I beg your pardon. I was confusing you with another man, Heyden of your year, who has been summoned for riding in Port Meadow."

The undergraduate gave a great sigh of relief and wiped the imaginary sweat of worry from his brow.

"I am most deeply sorry," went on the vice-president. "You see I'm very short-sighted, and in the darkness——"

"Oh, I see," said the undergraduate. "Then I am not guilty of any——"

"No, no, no," said the vice-president. "Pray forgive my mistake, and accept my sincere apologies for having caused you any anxiety."

Again the undergraduate sighed. "It is a very great relief to me, sir," he said.

"That's all right, that's all right. Then we'll both forget this—er—this little incident, eh?—Good morning, good morning."

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The undergraduate gave him good morning and moved towards the door.

"Now let's try it on," he thought. He stopped and turned. "Oh, about my chapels, sir," he said. "I'm afraid I'm rather behind. Late work, you see, makes it rather a strain to get up early in the morning—candle both ends, you know, and——"

"How many have you got to do?" asked the vice-president abruptly.

"Thirteen, sir."

"You may have two," said the vice-president. "In future try working early instead of late at night. Good morning."

"Thank you, sir, good morning." The undergraduate shut the door behind him and tore off his gown. "Pipped by gad!" he said. "A measly two

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS.

THE term was nearing its end. It had been early borne in upon Jack Felthropp in no uncertain fashion by a testy tutor, that it would be distinctly to his advantage, in more ways than one, were he to overcome the preliminary examination in Holy Scripture. Accordingly, his name, with the usual golden accompaniment, had made its way, on the usual sickly green paper, before the examiners.

Until now, Jack had given the matter no thought, but when the examination was no farther than fourteen days away, he decided to make a determined effort. For some totally foolish reason the authorities of the college were keeping a quiet eye upon him. He knew this, and deemed prudence the better part of valour. So, upon a night, he set forth accompanied by a Greek text and a Hawkins. With these two, who were to be his friends for the next fortnight—who would eat with him, join him at odd moments and burn the midnight oil with him—Felthropp made his way, naturally, round to the rooms of one, Crows, trusty friend and boon companion since

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the ancient days of fresherdom. With the casual knock of the man to whom admittance is never refused, nay, always welcomed, he burst in after dinner and found what he expected. In a characteristic attitude, Crows reclined with a comfort which was more than oriental in his enormous arm-chair, his legs upon another. Upon his lap there lay curled up a dog, a terrier, who cocked a sleepy eye at Felthropp as who should say, "Oh, it's you, is it?" and promptly shut it again. Propped against the dog was a book, a paper-covered flimsy-looking thing which Crows was studying, or he would have described the action as studying if he had been asked. He waved a graceful hand.

"Splendid man!" he said. "What's the programme?"

Felthropp pulled up the remaining arm-chair to the fire.

"Divvers," he said, "I've taken two ploughs already, as you know, and if I don't get through now—well, it may be awkward."

Crows held up his book.

"Who was Blastus?" he said.

"You in, too? Good man," said Felthropp. "We'll cram together—Blastus? Oh, chambermaid of Salome, I believe, though I wouldn't swear to it."

"Why don't you say dresser to Maud Allan while you're about it?" said Crows. "Have another try. Who was mistaken for whom, by whom——?"

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Felthropp cut in.

"When and where," he finished. "Too old. I know that. I suppose you've heard that one about the characteristics of the Pharisees? The street corner business?"

The terrier was heaved up and down by the organic action of Crows' laughter. He resented it, and looked reproachfully at his master. Apology was made.

"But look here," said Felthropp. "I haven't reached that stage yet. I'm going to do this thing with plan, method, system. After going twice through the texts I shall turn to Hawkins and we will question each other."

"That's rather a scheme," said Crows. "I'll do the same, and we'll make a cert of it."

When tobacco, matches, and pipes had been duly applied, the one to the other, silence fell upon the perfect whole, and the two men worked, the dog sleeping blissfully the while. Not a word was said for fully an hour. Then coffee was cooked, and after an interval for refreshments, work was resumed till bedtime. Night after night this programme was carried out. Theatres, concerts, bridge, and even cornstalking were abjured, and the two men devoted themselves seriously to the passing of this examination.

Felthropp was not a man who had imbibed Greek from his earliest youth. His school-days had been passed in France to a considerable extent, and so he was taking Honours in Modern

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Languages. Naturally, therefore, like a wise man, he did not despise his enemy, and laid himself out to mastering the Greek texts thoroughly. To Crows, this part of the matter was not so difficult. Greek had been drilled into him at the end of a cane when he wore Eton collars, so he gave more time and thought to Hawkins. But they both worked seriously and hard, brooking no intrusions. One night, for instance, a man had come in with the spell of bridge upon him. He showed great scorn when he discovered that they were occupied only with Divvers.

"Good Lord!" he said. "Why, there's another ten days yet. What on earth have you begun mugging that stuff now for? *I'm* going in, but three days is good enough for me."

The man's name was Rawlins.

"Rawlins, my son," said Felthropp, "outside! We are bees. You're a beastly drone. Hook it!"

And Rawlins, laughing, went.

And so, patiently, steadfastly, and with studied avoidance of expletive, these two friends and the dog worked night after night, setting all other matters aside. Much tobacco and coffee was consumed and, from time to time, when the outlook was more than usually black and forbidding, a cigar or two. As the days followed each other off the calendar their knowledge increased and deepened until, upon the fateful morning, they ventured to think that they were safe and diffi-

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dently congratulated each other. They looked back upon the strenuous fortnight with a certain amount of legitimate pride. It is indeed no small hardship to give up fourteen successive evenings to an examination so farcical and extravagant as Divvers, which is void of definite purpose or result, when they might have been doing a thousand and one things of enjoyment and interest such as only a University can provide.

As for the man Rawlins they were just a little sorry for him. They knew that he had recklessly pursued pleasures until three days before. Of course if he failed, and fail he would, it would be his own fault completely, but all the same it was rotten luck on the poor devil.

The morning of the examination came, Felthropp and Crows breakfasted together, glanced over a few essential points in Hawkins, and enjoyed a mouthful of tobacco in dark suits and white dress ties. Then assuming gowns and tucking battered squares—tassel-less in consequence of the previous Fifth when two men had conceived a lust for scalps—under their arms, sallied forth. The man Rawlins joined them on their way down to the schools. He was grievously troubled by remorse, and loudly repented his foolish ways, avowing that he “was a snip for a beastly plough!”

The hall of the schools was packed. Men from every college had come to undergo the humiliating ordeal, and stood about in groups talking, or sat huddled with Hawkins in corners putting on a

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vain final polish awaiting the bell. At last it rang. The porter sang out the North School, and half of the crowd filed off up the stone stairs, to be followed shortly by the other half to the South School. Dons, bearded as to chin and dull of aspect, with coloured trimmings to their gowns, welcomed them as the men for examination wandered up and down the alphabetically arranged tables, upon which were the papers in readiness, looking for their names. Gradually and without hurry each man found his place, and silence, unbroken save for coughing and rustling of papers and scratching of pens, ensued. The examining dons made pretence of being busy at their wonderfully carved thrones, and the hands of the clock stole relentlessly round. After about an hour the gargoyles outside saw some men still working, others, many others, sitting dejected, hands thrust deep in pockets, chewing the hard cud of ignorance and remorse. After another interval they saw men march up to the central table, place the results of their toil in pigeon-holed boxes, and smirk jauntily out.

Crows was out first. He lingered in the cold hall waiting for Felthropp with whom he was lunching. Presently Rawlins came down.

"How did you get on?" asked Crows.

"Ruddily!" said Rawlins. "Not an earthly. Only did seven questions." He was somewhat dejected and went out sadly.

Then Felthropp appeared and the two friends strode along the busy High comparing notes.

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I did ten out of twelve questions in full and half the other two," said Crows, "and I think I did them fairly well."

"I did eleven," said Felthropp, "and half the last one."

"That ought to see us through, I think. Our Vivas are on the same day."

"Good," said Felthropp. "I'm glad we swotted seriously. It's such a filthy nuisance to keep on going in for this piffling thing."

That night they did no work, feeling fairly safe as to the result. Instead, they went forth and found amusement into the small hours. The Viva was to be held in two days' time, and so the night before found them again looking up Hawkins, till they knew it backwards.

Again they went down to the schools in white ties and gowns for the more intimate oral questioning. Behind the table, covered with an old and inkstained cloth, sat the three inquisitors. bland, smiling, and cheerful. The usual calling of names took place. Crows and Felthropp were both among those who were desired to remain. One after another the men were examined and dismissed, until Crows, being early in the alphabet, was called. His answers were intelligent and correct, and, with a charming showing of teeth, the examiner wished him good morning. He shot a wink at Jack and passed out.

"Mr. Felthropp."

Felthropp sat down in the appointed chair.

"Can you tell me anything about Fair Havens?"

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Jack gave the desired information with a fund of absorbing detail.

"Thank you," said the examiner. "Do you know where St. Paul shaved his head?"

Felthropp again answered correctly.

"I think that'll do," said the examiner with another charmingly characteristic smile. "*Good morning.*"

Felthropp rose and departed. Crows was waiting in the hall.

"Good enough, eh?" said he.

"Oh, Lord, yes. Thank goodness I'm through at last." Felthropp heaved a sigh of relief.

They crossed over and asked the hall porter when the results would be posted.

"May be to-night. Anyhow to-morrow morning," was the answer.

So they went away buoyed up with faith and hope and disported themselves and made merry.

The following morning found them for the third time at the schools. The full results were posted. A crowd stood round, the language delicately shaded according as each man had passed or failed.

The two friends ran their eyes down the lists once, twice, and again. Then they turned and walked silently, arm-in-arm, out of the building.

Grief is sacred

Neither spoke until they were well into the Turl.

"And that swine Rawlins has got through!" cried Crows.

"Well, I'm—jiggered!" snorted Felthropp.

CHAPTER XXXV.

AN END OF TERM CONCERT.

THE man Felthropp had somehow or other been coddled into the belief that he could sing. It was his people who had done this to him, so of course when he came up and found that there was a College Musical, he paid his sub. and duly became a member without further difficulty. As a matter of fact his voice wasn't so awfully bad and he had a quick ear. This served him well, as he couldn't read a note of music. But his pal Turnips was a musician. Of this there was no shadow of doubt, no possible doubt whatever. Not only could he play the piano as if it were a whole orchestra, but he could sing anything from second bass to the shrillest falsetto and, as befitted a Yale undergraduate, was a past master in the art of "swipes" and "barber's shops"—a form of harmony peculiar to coons and American undergraduates. So these two laboured vocally every Sunday with the rest of the society until the end of term concert was arranged, and programmes drawn up. It was the first concert of the kind which these two had attended and they were

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somewhat mystified to see that part three of the programme merely contained the words: "The Ladies retire."

During the term Turnips had taught Felthropp most of his American songs, and at various evening sing-songs these two had performed unaccompanied duets containing many "swipe" harmonies. The Britishers had never heard such music before and were highly amused at its quaintness and newness. They had also, in spite of their only having been two terms in residence, concocted a very personal song about the dons, "*privatim et seriatim*," which they had set to a very catchy American air. It had been very amusing and passed away odd half-hours with Turnips orchestrating in his best form.

The concert was a more or less informal affair. The dons and their wives in dress clothes occupied the front seats in Hall. The performers also dressed, but the rest of the college appeared in the usual tweed coats and grey bags and sat about anywhere. The high table where the dons ate had been removed, leaving the platform clear, except for the piano specially brought in for the occasion.

Part one of the programme opened with the musical society. They went through the stereotyped part-song in full blast, lined up round the platform, while the college listened with sarcastic amusement and equally sarcastic applause. Needless to say, the dons and their wives hid any amusement they may have felt and were

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quite straightforward in their applause. The rest of the programme consisted of various solos by third year men, rowing blues, and so forth, quartettes by those who really knew something about music, and more part-songs by the musical society. So the time dragged on until at last part three was announced and the ladies retired. Most of the dons stayed, taking out-of-the-way back seats. Some of the musical society slipped away to return in tweed coats over their dress shirts. They found everybody smoking and someone singing a comic song, while enormous sconces of claret and other kinds of cup were circulating freely. Everybody had moved up and now sat in the seats which had been placed for the dons and the ladies. The whole college joined in the chorus and thumped out the time with their feet or anything else that was handy. After the burst of applause had died away at the end of the song, a gang of men sitting in a corner yelled out together, "We—want—Muggins! We—want—Muggins!" until Muggins—a man who had achieved immortal notoriety at the fresher's wine in his first term—stepped up on to the platform. He was a light-haired, good looking enough man, and the word "shyness" was not included in his vocabulary.

"I haven't got my songs," he announced, "but I'll recite if you like?"

"Hurrah! Good old Muggins. Give her ten!" Shrieks of encouragement came from all parts of the hall. Muggins waited, with his hands behind his back, until the place was fairly silent.

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“‘They tell me I am beautiful——’”

He got no further. Roars of laughter, cat-calls, miaowlings, and wild cheering greeted his attempt to recite Calverly. Poor Muggins reddened to the neck. He stopped indecisively. Should he brave it out or should he chuck the whole thing and go away? He braved it and gabbled out the rest—not a word of which could be heard—and hurried off the platform tingling all over.

At last the laughter and applause died down and another man was called. This man had no voice, and was a shy, spectacled man who blushed whenever his name was called unexpectedly. He had occasionally been heard warbling “Put me among the girls” when he thought there was no one about. In vain he protested that he did not sing, had no music, would be hanged if he’d sing! He was carried bodily, struggling wildly, on to the platform. The man at the piano thumped out the opening bars and he had to sing it. It was a brave effort and the applause was terrific, when, sweating horribly, he fled from the platform and buried his face in the nearest scone.

“We—want—Turnips—and—Felthropp! We—want—Turnips—and—Felthropp!” The two men gasped with surprise and dried up from funk. It was hopeless to resist, and up they went. Turnips gave the note on the piano, and they went through a selection of their curious American repertoire, unaccompanied, feeling most horribly nervous and hot. At last the ordeal was over and they started off the platform, but there was a

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loud cry for an encore, and they were forcibly prevented from leaving it.

"We—want—the—don—song! The—don—song!" This was worse than ever! Most of the dons were sitting round the back.

"We shall have to chance it!" whispered Felthropp to Turnips. "Go on, strike up. I don't care a damn. I'll sing it if I get sent down."

So Turnips played the accompaniment while Felthropp sang about each don in turn. It has been said that the song was just a little more than personal, and only suitable really for private binges. Felthropp, however, encouraged by many different sconces, sang out at the top of his lungs. The chorus went like this—

"Ain't he neat, sweet, handsome, and fair?
He is a daisy the girls all declare.
He's a high, rollin', rollickin' swell,
Here comes old—say! don't he look well?"

The college, fully realising that the dons were all ears to hear the verses about each other, gave the choruses like one man. Felthropp kept a watchful eye on the particular don about whom he was singing. The older and more sensible took it well. They were infinitely amused at the colossal cheek of it. But the younger ones, who had not got over the sense of their importance, seemed greatly annoyed and insulted. It mattered little how they liked it, however, for the song went on verse after verse until every don had been skitted, and the two performers hurried off to

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quench their raging thirst, and hide from the wrath of the offended donlets. The crowd rocked with laughter and delight, and to cap all, demanded with untiring persistence one of the annoyed young dons to give them a solo. This he refused. His dignity was upset. But gentle, though firm, hands propelled him willy-nilly on to the platform, and did not let him down till he had performed.

Felthropp and Turnips were a trifle uneasy as to their future. If these people in authority were really bored there might be trouble, and, to their agitation, one of the older ones was coming over. They greeted him with a bland but nervous smile, although he was by way of being a great friend of theirs in unofficial moments. The don leant towards them, "Perfectly delightful!" he said. "But a trifle—er—risky, eh? Well, well. Will you present me with a copy of the libretto?"

Huge relief swept over the two men. All was well.

"Rather!" said Felthropp. "I'll bring you up a copy to-morrow."

"Thanks very much," said the don. "I shall be for ever in your debt," he added with a smile.

The clock outside struck midnight, and Crooks bustled in to announce the fact. He had already sung a long Irish comic song, amid wild applause, so he did not hurry them. Linking hands in a straggling circle, "Should auld acquaintance" was solemnly chanted, and the men dispersed for the night.

The concert was over—and no harm done!

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE ROYAL AND ANCIENT.

THE captain of the Oxford team said good-night to the professional and strode thoughtfully out of the tin-roofed barn, which did duty as a clubhouse. He mounted his bicycle, and feeling rather pleased with himself, started on the ride back from Cowley. He had quite good reason for self-congratulation—out in thirty-five and back in thirty-four on a stodgy, slippery course in sticky, damp weather is a rather useful performance. Then, too, the others were playing well, and he had been able to choose a very strong representative side, so that victory for them was a reasonable expectation, in spite of the fact that the Light Blues were also, according to the daily press, singularly promising. It was two days before the match, and as he pedalled along the slithery roads, and dodged the treacherous tram-lines, the captain cast about in his mind for a way of spending the evening in a manner that would take his thoughts off the approaching event, and yet permit him to get to bed fairly early, so as to keep his nerves in good trim. It was Thursday. The

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Union wouldn't be a bad notion. It would be soothing enough, he thought, and besides preventing him from getting through too much tobacco, would probably make him very sleepy. Just the thing !

He spun over Magdalen Bridge, rang his bell loudly as three choir boys did their best to fall under his front wheel, missed them by a hair's-breadth, and after several narrow escapes along the crowded High, turned down the Corn from Carfax. Here he found that the German band had taken their stand, and were being listened to by a numerous and highly appreciative audience, both undergraduate and townee. Their high appreciation was however passive, not active, for as soon as one of the alien instrumentalists broke away from the little circle of wooden music stools and produced the collection bag, the effect was as though a policeman had told them to pass along—they did not move altogether away, but dodged him. The captain bought a paper from an undersized youth, who looked as though he should still have been at school. His vocabulary however, when he received the correct sum of a halfpenny proved conclusively that he had passed the higher standard. The shower of expletives was like charity to the captain—they dropped upon the earth beneath, missing him entirely, and he rode on peaceful and kindly to all mankind. He arrived finally at his digs in Beaumont Street, and was ministered to by a Swiss angel in greasy evening clothes and a tired shirt front, whose talk

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was an odd medley of several of the more widely known continental languages.

The captain sank into an arm-chair, chose carefully an old and tested briar from a much-carved pipe rack—on which one expected to see the legend, "A present from Merry Margate," but was disappointed—filled and lit it, and produced his evening paper. The room was large and, from a landlady's point of view, well furnished. The usual collection of curious, hybrid ferns filled up the odd corners, woollen things of many hues hung over the backs of chairs and sofa, pictures of enviably muscular women with flowing tresses clinging to treacle-pudding like rocks, while the would be surging waves roared around their knees, under which was printed in heavy black letters, "Nearer my God to Thee," cast a breezy optimism over the room. On the mantel-piece were several coloured dinner menus, and two or three ash trays, which, instead of carrying out their appointed task, were promoted to the duty of holding golf balls in various stages of service. In the far corner near the window was a piano, open, whose rest supported the music and lyrics of "Our Miss Gibbs," also open and much dog-eared from frequent use.

The polyglot brought in tea. "You will 'ave ze dinner at seven, nein, monsieur?" he asked respectfully.

"Please," said the captain, adding as an after-thought, "we shall be eight at lunch to-morrow."

"Eight! Ach Herr liebe Gott! Bien, Signor."

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He retired, clucking like the hen who instead of giving birth to the stereotyped single egg, has been somehow responsible for twins.

The captain dined and found his way to the Union. Its soporific effects were even stronger than he had anticipated, and at the end of an hour, during which time he had not understood a word of the speeches, nor had been moved to anything more violent than a smile at the private business, he drifted out unobserved, being careful, though he had not the least idea what it was, to register his vote in favour of the motion, and came by easy stages back to home and bed.

At lunch next day the remainder of the team came in. They were all going down that night, for the match the following day. The captain came back from an uneasy prowl round the town to find them all in his room.

"Hullo, skipper. How d'you feel?"

"He looks gloomy enough."

"Hullo, you fellers," said the captain. "You seem as cheery as if we'd already wiped the Tabs."

"That's where you foozle the stroke, old man. As a matter of fact, we've all been sitting here," said the B.N.C. man, "like a lot of undertakers, for the last five minutes."

"H'm!" said the captain. "*I* think *I* was down in one. Undertakers are proverbially cheery devils."

"No, bar cod. We, or anyhow *I*, have got a shocking needle."

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"What do you think old Squggers did last night?" asked the Magdalen man with the usual Magdalen scorn.

"Got tight?"

"No, far worse. I woke up in the middle of the night and heard weird thumping noises above. Couldn't possibly sleep through it, so I went up with murder in my heart, armed with my heaviest niblick. What d'you think I found?"

"Cough it up," said the B.N.C. man.

"Why old Squggers was standing in his pyjas with a baffle, slashing at candle ends and bits of bread with Braid's book open on the table by his side."

The rest laughed. The man alluded to as Squggers laughed nervously and got red. "Oh, lie down," he said. "You're a prize liar."

"If anyone cares to go to your room, they'll see two broken pictures *and* a broken baffle, mark you."

"What!" exclaimed the skipper anxiously. "A broken baffle?"

The man alluded to as Squggers shifted his feet. "Fact is," he exclaimed, "that brute took my eye off at the precise moment, and I hit the table leg. But I've got another, of course."

"Thank Heaven!" said the captain. "But look here, you chaps, we aren't here to discuss needle effects. We've got to settle the vitally important question of clothes."

The great moment had arrived. A keen, anxious look came over the faces of the team.

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The captain laid down his pipe and took pencil and paper.

"Now then," he said to the Magdalen man, "what about you?"

The Magdalen man passed a hand quickly over his Magdalen hair. "Well," he said. "At present I'm all in favour of green, so I've thought up a green suit with stockings to match."

"Well?" said the captain anxiously.

"Well, there's a yellow spot all round the knee of the stocking."

"Can't be done," said the captain. "Wire to the Burlington Arcade for plain green stockings to match." He made a note on paper. "And what's yours?"

The B.N.C. man jumped in confidently. "Ah!" he said. "I've got a plum-coloured effect throughout."

"That's hot," said the captain. "I pass that *nem. con.* How about you, Squiggers?"

Squiggers blushed. "Well—er—I hope you don't mind, but—I've only got an ordinary Harris tweed brown thing, and——"

"Oh, Lord, Squiggers, you're a rotter. Harris tweeds are dead and buried. You can't possibly wear a prehistoric thing like that."

"I'm frightfully sorry, but the only other thing I've got is that big yellow check thing."

"With your Bullingdon tie that'll look immense," said the captain.

"I've given mine a good deal of quiet thought," said the House man. "It's a sort of blue coat,

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like those dump hats at Castell's, with brown breeches and grey stockings, with red tops and tassels. Rather hot, eh? Only one button on the sleeve and a black and white check cap."

"That's quiet and up-to-date, I think," said the captain, questioning the others in turns, and passing them all with credit. "Well, thank Heaven that's all right," he said at last. "Only one pair of stockings to be altered. I had a devil of a trouble last year with some of you, you blighters, but thank the Lord you're growing sensible in your old age. Now for lunch."

They all caught the four-fifty from Oxford.

"Well, so long you fellers," said the captain at Paddington. "We shall simply knock 'em at Sunningdale, and they're going to give us a special page in the *Sketch* too this year."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A HALF BLUE, FOUR FULL BLUES, AND A PROCTOR.

THE sounds of many bells striking the hour after midnight floated through an open window high up in St. John's College. The moon, peeping round one of the trees outside in the Giler, saw, through a haze of tobacco-smoke, four men playing bridge by candle light. On the table by their side were four cups, a milk jug, a sugar basin, and a coffee pot. A fire flickering behind them cast their shadows huge and distorted on to the end wall. And then a huge cloud, the herald of approaching hosts, crept up and got in the way, so that the moon did not see them finish the rubber and stretch themselves lazily and comfortably.

"By Jove, surely that wasn't one o'clock?" The speaker, Frank Leslie, pulled out his watch. He was no longer an undergraduate, but a budding barrister, spending a week-end with friends still up. "It was, though," he said, returning his watch to his pocket. "How am I going to get back to the Mitre?"

"The old, old way, my dear chap," said his

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friend and host, Philip Owen, "It's too late to get out through the lodge."

"Yes, that's all right," said Leslie, loading another pipe from a large blue tobacco jar, "but this wasn't my college, and I don't know your jolly old walls."

"Yes, it *was* a pity you went to the wrong college," said Owen. "However, I'll escort you over the boundary. But you needn't go yet. Let's have some more coffee." He went to the fire with the pot.

"Not for me," said Leslie firmly. "Show me off the premises first. I'm all in favour of bed as the next item on the programme." He yawned cavernously.

"How about you two?" asked Owen.

The two others, it appeared, also considered sleep appropriate to the occasion, so Owen put down the pot. "Just a shake," he said, "and I'll be with you. I must get a boot on." Considering comfort an essential to good bridge, Owen had shed his coat and collar before they started to play, and swathed himself in a lurid Sherlock Holmes-like dressing-gown, with slippers to match. He crossed the room and went out into his bedder, returning in a moment or two in rubber shoes, a tweed coat, and a rowing muffler round his neck.

"Right," he said. "Either of you others coming?"

"Too much faag," yawned one.

"Thanks very much, but I lack the necessary energy," said the other gravely.

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"Slack brutes!" said Leslie, laughing. "Come on then, Phil. Good-night, you fellers. Thanks for the game."

"Huh! I should think you do after pouching five bob. I shall be broke for the rest of term, you blighter. Good-night." The man rose and followed to the door.

"Leave the lights," sang out Owen from the stairs.

"All right." The two slackers went out, leaving the candles burning, and clattered slowly off to their respective rooms.

Leslie and Owen descended the wooden staircase. The noise of their feet echoed loudly for some moments until it changed to the crunching of gravel. The two men were in the quad, and the staircase was again asleep.

"I expect all the dons are in their downy couches by now," said Owen, "so we needn't worry. Go easy past the lodge though, in case any of the scouts are still knocking round."

The clouds had nearly conquered the moon, and she only struggled out at intervals. The two linked arms and strode through the quad. They tip-toed down the flag-stoned passage past the kitchen and hall, and only walked ordinarily again when they had crossed the first quad and were safely past the lodge, and out beyond the South Lecture Room, into a sort of miniature quad where there was an outbuilding, whose roof sloped up to the top of the street wall. Phil Owen made a jump and a scramble, and with the

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aid of a convenient window ledge, was on the roof in a moment. He crawled noiselessly up and peered over to right and left. "All serene," he said. "Come on, Frank."

Leslie followed his lead without too much noise, and they dropped one after another into the Giler. Dusting themselves down, they again linked arms and marched away past Balliol into the Broad. The roads were absolutely deserted, and the last undergraduate piano had been shut, so that in the silence their footsteps made a curiously contrasting noise — Frank's rang out loudly, while Owen's rubber shoes made a sort of dragging shuffle as if pats of butter were being flopped violently on to a dairy counter.

"What on earth are you coming for?" asked Leslie. "Think I've forgotten the way?"

Owen laughed. "No, but I thought a little air after all that fug would do me good. The progs are all in bed long ago, and I can get back by the Parks Road all right. I've done it heaps of times."

"Quite a hobby, eh?" Leslie smiled. "Wish I hadn't got to go to-morrow. But I'm coming up for the boxing, by Jove. Are you going to pull it off?"

"Yes, I think so," said Owen. "At least Morley does, and he ought to know."

"Well, good luck, anyhow, old man."

"Thanks," said Owen.

The two men wheeled into the Turl in silence. In the uncertain light Exeter and Jesus loomed

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enormous and pitchy black on either side, and the friends made their way down the street, the one full of fond reminiscences and the other big with the delights and possibilities of the present.

The hotel was in total darkness, shutters up and bolts shut. It was evident that they did not approve of prodigal returnings in the small hours. Leslie, however, did not worry about the non-conformist conscience. He seized the bell and pulled lustily and its ugly jangle broke up the stillness somewhere in the interior. After what seemed to be an interminable wait, he seized the bell again and was about to pull, when shuffling footsteps came down the passage, a lantern was set down and one by one the bolts were shot back. A policeman strolled by, eyeing them narrowly, and halted a few paces away.

"I'll come round and see you off to-morrow," said Owen.

"Good man," said Leslie. "The eleven three."

"Right. Good-night, old man," said Owen.

"Good-night," answered Leslie as the door opened and a yawning face peered blinking round the corner.

"Sorry to trouble you," he said to the owner of it, "but you shut up so early. . . . Good night, Phil."

Phil waved a hand and turned down the High. A black shadow sprang out from the railing of St. Mary's Church, and shot across the road with a sinister miaow. It struck Phil that there was something wrong with the church somehow, and

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it was not till he turned up by the Camera that he realised with a laugh that the cabs were not there. Of course, that's what it was. This is great, thought Phil, much better than being in bed merely sleeping. Look at those All Souls' statue things. By Jove, don't they look topping against the sky. Gad, what a gorgeous place this is! Wish I could paint it. I'd join myself to the army of easel users and do a series on Oxford at night. Hullo, there's somebody about! Another bobby. "Good-night," he said cheerily, passing with his hands in his pockets. The policeman mumbled and followed him with his eyes. Rubber shoes on a civilian, even though he be an undergraduate, are the parents of suspicion in the mind of a zealous keeper of law and order. The clouds, which had been threatening all the evening, began to empty themselves gently, relentlessly, and Owen, turning up his coat collar, noticed how the reflection of the lamps suddenly sprang into being upon the now glistening pavements.

He hurried past Hertford intent now on nothing but bed. Glancing down the wet Broad as he crossed over by the King's Arms at the corner, Owen saw a third policeman stalking along with his waterproof cape on, by the Sheldonian. "Poor devil, he thought, rotten game being a policeman on a night like this. Thank Heaven, I shall be in in about five minutes." He dived down Parks Road and hurried along under the wall of Trinity. St. John's gardens adjoin those of Trinity, and Owen was making for a spot he knew well, where

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aided by the branches of a convenient tree, it was a perfectly easy matter to get over into safety.

"Hang!" he muttered, looking along the path. "Another beastly policeman. Just my luck. What the deuce shall I do?" He bent his head down and hurried past, thinking hard. The policeman said "Good-night." Owen did not answer. "I can't get in where I got out, it's too high," he thought. "I'd better walk on and come back when this brute moves on. I don't suppose he'll stay there for ever." He did so, crossed the road and turned down South Parks Road by Mansfield College. There he waited for a moment and then, coming back, returned towards the convenient tree.

The policeman was still there.

Owen hesitated a moment and then went boldly up to him.

"Good evening," he said.

"Evening," replied the policeman.

"I say, do you mind turning your back while I climb in here? It's my college and——"

"Can't be done," said the policeman. "You look a bit ragged for a college gent," he went on suspiciously.

Owen laughed.

"Do I?" he said. "Well, the fact is we were playing bridge rather late, and I just chucked on these things to see a friend back to his hotel."

"Oh did you, did you?" said the policeman, a surly, heavily-moustached brute.

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"Look here," said Owen; "if you'll let me climb in I'll give you five bob in the morning."

"Five bob. Now you're talking. Can't you give us it now?"

"Well, I haven't got any money on me at the moment."

"Well, 'ow am I goin' to get it?" asked the policeman, with a return of his suspicions.

"Come to the lodge to-morrow at eight-thirty and I'll be there," said Owen.

"No kid?"

"Honour bright," laughed Owen.

"All right. Over you go," said the policeman, turning his back.

"Thank you," said Jack. "You're a sportsman."

The policeman wheeled round again and spoke in a hurried whisper.

"You can't do it now, sir," he said. "The inspector's coming along. It's more than my job's worth if he sees you. You walk round and come back again in five minutes. Quick now, sir."

Jack glanced back and saw an inspector coming towards them. He muttered something under his breath and hurried off towards the Broad.

The policeman saluted stiffly as the inspector stopped.

"Who was that?" he asked.

The policeman cleared his throat.

"Suspicious-looking person, sir, but he seemed all right so I didn't bother about him."

"I'll just keep an eye on him," said the inspector, hurrying after Owen.

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Owen glanced over his shoulder and saw him.

"That brute's given me away. Curse!"

Without a second thought, he started running. The inspector blew his whistle.

The policeman trotted up to him. Owen sprinted along the Broad. Two other policemen appeared from nowhere, out of Holywell Street, and ran up to the inspector.

"Catch that man," he cried. "There he goes down the Broad."

The three saluted and clattered off, their capes flapping and their rubber shoes squelching heavily. The inspector trotted majestically after them.

Owen turned his head as he ran.

"Well, I'm blowed!" he exclaimed, and put on on a spurt.

He tore along, running strong, in excellent training as the boxing competition was very near and he had been taking it seriously. As he dashed into the Turl, one glance behind showed him one of the policemen far ahead and the two others toiling after him. The one in front was evidently a bit of a runner. He had shed his cape and was covering the ground like a steam-engine. Owen settled into his stride, praying that he wouldn't run into another policeman ahead. Unless he could dodge them pretty quickly he felt that he was a "goner," as it would be impossible to leave them sufficiently far behind to enable him to climb the wall unseen. So he set his teeth and ran, dashed past Exeter, turned into B.N.C. Lane and tore down it. Coming out the other end by

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the Radcliffe he heard the policemen's feet crashing after him half way down.

Owen wheeled to the right and sprinted over the cobble-stones round towards All Souls. A crash and a loud oath, and glancing back as he ran, Owen sputtered with laughter to see one man picking himself up off the ground. The front policeman was still going strong, however, evidently "out for blood."

Owen raced on, nearing the dark High Street. He was beginning to feel a little worried. What the devil should he do if—crash! His thoughts were scattered to the four winds as he found himself sprawling on his hands and knees with a policeman gasping on his back about a yard away at the entrance to the High.

"Gad!" he panted and picking himself up, tore off again down the High.

The sprinting policeman yelled out, "Catch him," as the prostrate man got up and Owen shot down the Turl, blown and gasping for breath.

"Stitch!" he gasped. "My hat!"

With a last effort he dodged down Market Street, looking right and left for a possible hiding-place. The gods were kind to him. He saw an open window with a faint light inside. Like a flash he made for it, and as two of the policemen swung round the corner by Jagers, Owen wriggled through gasping, shut down the window after him, and fell into a panting heap on a chair.

"What the devil do you want?" said a quiet voice behind him.

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Owen turned and looked at him, absolutely blown and unable to speak. The man was a tall, clean-shaven, youngish man, with a pipe stuck in his teeth. He looked more amused than anything else, and said with a little smile,

"Been taking a little ekker?"

The sound of running men dashed past the window.

Owen smiled. "Yes, got a drink?"

The man moved to a cupboard. "Whisky?" he asked.

Owen nodded. "You're a sportsman."

The man brought a bottle of whisky and a syphon and mixed a drink. He pushed it across to Owen and sat down. "Tell me," he said.

Jack gulped down the drink. "A friend of mine is staying at the Mitre. We were playing bridge till about one, so I climbed out of college and saw him to his pub. When I got back, a bobby was under the wall where I wanted to get in. I offered him five bob to go away. He accepted all right, but a rotten inspector came along. I had to move on. He blew his whistle, and three of 'em chased me, and here I am."

The man poured himself a drink. "Help yourself," he said with a smile.

"I ran into one in the High, and bowled him over. And another blighter fell and hurt himself by B.N.C. Pouf! Great Scott. I feel as limp as a rag." Owen helped himself to another whisky. "I say, do you mind if I stay here for a bit till they've gone? Then I can slip out and get back."

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"Certainly. . . . Did you meet any proctors?" asked the man.

"No. Too late. They're all in bed."

"Do you think so? Baccy?" The man pushed forward his pouch.

"No, thanks," said Owen. "I'm not smoking."

"Training?" asked this monosyllabic person.

"Boxing," answered Owen. "I say, will you come to brekker with me to-morrow morning?"

"*This* morning?" asked the man.

"So it is. Yes."

"I can't this morning, I shall be busy. But to-morrow I should be delighted."

Owen got up. "Good man," he said. "You're a sportsman, and I should like to know you better. To-morrow then. Eight-thirty."

The man also got up. He laid down his pipe. "With pleasure. What name and college?"

"Owen, of St. John's."

"Thank you. Will you kindly call on me to-morrow—this morning I mean, at nine o'clock at Exeter? My name is Wallace, the junior proctor you know—If you must go, let me show you out."

"Well I'm——!" Owen gasped, staring at him in amazement.

"Not at all," said the pro-proctor with a quiet smile. He opened the door and ushered Owen out. "Come by the door at nine o'clock, would you mind?" he said. "They might be annoyed if you came by the window. Good-night."

The door shut quietly, and Owen found himself

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in Market Street again, not knowing whether he were on his head or his heels.

"Well of all the——" he said savagely. "And the brute's coming to brekker. I'll give him sausage and mashed!"

Blazing with anger and heedless of possible policemen, Owen strode along the Turl in deep thought; turned into the Broad, and made his way to Parks Road. As he rounded the corner, he ran full tilt into the policeman who knew how to run.

"Ah, got you this time!" The policeman clutched his shoulder.

Surprised by the suddenness of this attack, Owen instinctively struck out and caught the policeman a smart jab on the jaw with his left. He lost his balance and fell. In a second he was up again, and dropping his cape squared up to Owen in a fighting attitude, fuming with rage and pain.

Owen led his left again. The policeman slipped it, and planted a heavy blow on Owen's ribs. He tried to follow this up with his right, but Owen, jumping back half a pace, swung his right with a crash on the policeman's jaw.

He went down like an ox, his helmet rolling several paces away.

"Well I'm blowed!" said Owen for the third time that night, and snatching up the policeman's helmet, he dashed down the road past Trinity gardens, vaulted the railings under the college wall, and shinned up the well-known tree like a

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monkey, with the helmet in his teeth. In complete shadow he sat on the top of the wall to get his breath, and looked back at the still prostrate form of the policeman lying where he had fallen, about fifty yards away. Presently the man stirred, rolled over and sat up, looking about him stupidly.

Owen chuckled and dropped noiselessly into safety in the college gardens.

"Over the mantelpiece, I *think*," he said, swinging the helmet. "And now perhaps bed."

From all sides bells suddenly pealed out again. It was two o'clock. Five minutes later, the moon, dodging an attacking cloud, took another peep into that open window high up in the college, and saw a man come in, carefully put a policeman's helmet in the middle of the table and blow out the guttering candles.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

SPARE MEN.

THE weather was what it should be, glorious. No one could explain it, for as a rule Henley seems to be the one place on earth where it rains all day, especially at regatta time. The crew, however, did not worry about anything so foolish as the reason why. It was good enough for them that they were piling on layer after layer of sunburn. They had been in training there a week. Everyone was as fit as a fiddle, and the spare men got what joy they could out of pulling up and down the course in a "tooth-pick," vainly trying to induce people to believe that they were competitors for the "Diamonds." They 'coddled' no one.

One day they drew apart to commune with nature and discuss the situation.

"Look here, old man," said Jeffreys to his fellow spare man, "tooth-picking is all right. Keeps one fit and in practice and all that. But I'm just a trifle fed with things."

"What's the notion?" queried Mathews.

The two were paddling a punt slowly down the booms waiting for the Eight to pass.

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"The Eight have the fun," went on Jeffreys, "not to mention glory. We're just pottering about praying that no one will crock. Nobody is interested in us, or cares a hang apparently what we do, so long as we don't smoke or break training in any other way."

"True for you," said Mathews. "Well?"

"At present it isn't well," said Jeffreys. "But I'm jolly well going to make it so. There's an awfully nice girl who——"

"Oh, it's girls, is it?" laughed Mathews. "They don't interest me much."

"Oh, all right. Enough said then." Jeffreys went on paddling and remained silent.

Mathews considered. "Well, don't get stuffy. What's your game? I'll help you if I can."

Jeffreys was mollified. "Well, all you can do is to keep a still tongue in your head. This girl who is awfully pretty and punts jolly well is usually about alone, or with a Tab Blue, who, I suppose, must be a brother. He looks like one, anyway."

"Suppose he's not?" suggested Mathews. "Suppose he's engaged to the lady?"

"You're a beastly pessimist," said Jeffreys. "If he is, well, I shall draw a blank, that's all. Anyhow, I'm going to speak to her. The others will probably rag me like anything, but so long as you don't give me away, I can easily explain that she's a school friend of my sister or something."

"I shan't give you away, old man," said

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Mathews. "I may not be interested in girls, but at least I think I am some kind of a sportsman."

"Good for you," said Jeffreys. "I suppose you must be, in spite of not being interested in them. I shall do the deed this afternoon—if she's here."

The Eight rowed by. Jeffreys snorted. "Of course I'm jolly thankful to be here at all," he said, "even as spare man, but they have all the fun."

"Lucky devils," sighed Mathews. "However, this gorgeous sun keeps me fairly happy, considering. Let's go back. I'm going sculling."

They turned the punt and returned to the changing tents, and together sculled their tooth-picks down the course, with a watchful backward eye for other craft.

The crew adjourned after lunch to play cricket in the garden with a stump and tennis ball—the usual pre-rowing amusement. Jeffreys having changed his tie and put on a pristine pair of white shoes, lurked out unobserved and made his way down to the river. Tossing his blazer on to the cushions and turning up his sleeves—he was secretly rather pleased with the development of his forearm, and thought the ghastly tattoo thereon was very effective—got into the punt and poled down towards the booms. In spite of his bold words about "doing the deed," he felt decidedly nervous as he shot the bridge and came nearer to the scene of action. He cast a keen

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eye forward. To the right the Leander Club patronised the humble dressing tents. A few punts were just being pushed off, but the Cambridge man, who was probably a brother, was not there. He passed Hobbs's boat-house and glided gently pass Phyllis Court. A few people sat about in deck chairs on the lawn, and opposite them moored along the booms were several punts. But his eye sought in vain for the lady of his choice. Failing to see her, Jeffreys became annoyed. "Just when I've made up my mind, of course, she doesn't come down," he thought. "Just my luck.—Good Lord ! there she is."

Some distance down, close in to the bank, there sat a charmingly dressed girl in a very smart punt.

"Damn !" said Jeffreys.

She was not alone. At the opposite end of the punt there lay the brother, presumably, indulging in a siesta. "He's a brother, all right," thought Jeffreys, casting a scornful eye on the man's recumbent person.

The girl looked up from a magazine as Jeffreys' punt went by. He shot her a quick glance and looked hurriedly away again.

"She's a corker," thought Jeffreys. "Hang that beastly Tab !" Feeling very annoyed, he put his back into it and punted hard past house-boat after house-boat. Before he eased up, the Vanderbilt barge was far behind and Temple Island just in front of him. He ran the punt into the bank and lay down in the sun, hot and

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irritable. "Not only do I have the rotten luck to be a miserable spare man," he thought, "but now this beastly brother hangs round with her instead of staying with his crew. It's the limit. I'm going back to play cricket."

He rose again, and picking his pole out of the mud, started back. He looked up stream and gave an exclamation of delight. Not a hundred yards away was the girl, alone, paddling gently but firmly down.

Jeffreys' pulse fluttered. "Now's my chance. But what the devil shall I say?"

The other punt was getting nearer and nearer in a strict line. Jeffreys had an inspiration. He gave one huge shove and turned round to watch a solitary sculler behind him. The girl saw this, but what was more she saw the punts would not collide. The man had misjudged the pace and angle. So she gave a little flick of her paddle and the two punts collided. The girl gave a little scream. Jeffreys staggered and only saved himself from going overboard. "I'm most awfully sorry," he said. "I hope I didn't frighten you."

The girl looked at him and smiled calmly. "I was afraid," she said, "that you were going overboard."

"Thanks very much," said Jeffreys. He thought she was even more corking than ever now that he was actually speaking to her. "Er—was that your brother in the punt with you just now?"

"Yes," she said. "Do you know him?" She thought what a good-looking boy he was, and

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how the sun had bleached his hair at the edges. She had noticed him sculling about every day, and had marked him down as having possibilities.

"No, I don't know him personally, only by sight." Jeffreys shot a quick look at her. "But need that matter?"

"I'm afraid I don't quite——"

The girl looked puzzled. She did it so well that the man explained.

"I mean," said Jeffreys. "Can't you introduce me to him as an old friend?"

"Oh, but——"

"Please don't say no," said Jeffreys. "You see I've known you by sight ever since I've been here. And now since this er—accident with the punts, mayn't I go on knowing you?"

At the word accident, the girl smiled. Jeffreys had not seen the skilful movement of her paddle. She was glad. It gave her a distinct advantage.

"Quite impossible," she said finally. "You see, my people and my brother——"

"Oh, but," said Jeffreys. "All Cambridge men are sportsmen." It was a singularly tactful remark. The girl laughed. "She is a corker!" thought Jeffreys. Somehow his vocabulary did not seem to get beyond that word, but Oxford men were ever conservative.

"Thanks very much," she said. "I appreciate that remark coming from a Dark Blue."

"Oh, not at all," said Jeffreys airily.

The girl suddenly began to paddle away.

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"Oh, but look here——" cried Jeffreys in dismay.

"My brother's coming down in a sculling boat," explained the girl. "And I should prefer to break it to him gently."

"Oh, right oh!" said Jeffreys. "I say, will you be coming out after dinner to-night?"

"Perhaps," said the girl with a smile. "But I'm not sure."

"Well," said Jeffreys. "I shall find you at Tims's then about half-past eight." He raised his hat and punted on. "Rather decent place, Henley," he thought.

Opposite Phyllis Court, he saw Mathews sleeping blissfully in a canoe tied to the booms. Jeffreys went alongside and woke him.

"Hullo," said Mathews, "where have you been?"

Jeffreys grinned. "Oh, punting about," he said.

"With her?" queried Mathews, interpreting the grin correctly.

Jeffreys tossed his hat to the cushions and smothered his smooth hair. "She's a—a corker," he said.

"Then he is a brother," said Mathews. "Congratulations."

"You know," said Jeffreys, *a propos* of nothing, "spare man's not a bad game. After all, being in the boat's an awful swot—toiling up and down twice a day and getting cursed heartily by the coach for imaginary faults."

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"Oh, quite imaginary," said Mathews drily. "By the way, are you coming down to the concert thing to-night?"

"Er—no," said Jeffreys. "I've got a previous engagement for to-night, old man!"

Mathews smiled. "May I come?" he asked.

"Not much!" said Jeffreys. "Girls don't interest you."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE LAST NIGHT.

WE had won the ladies! What is more, we only lost the Fours because—but what does it matter why? We were very pleased with ourselves, and quite willing to look upon the loss of the Fours as a gift, a consolation prize, to the other crew, poor devils! Anyhow, they were Oxford too, so it didn't matter.

After much speechifying and applause the prize-giving came to an end and the pot was delivered into our hands, and we marched up to the house in triumph, through Henley town, in a gang. To our delight we found that it took four whole bottles of fizz to fill it for the christening. This rite was duly performed with all the necessary pomp and circumstance, and the brimming beaker passed solemnly from mouth to mouth until it was once more empty.

We had accepted an invitation to have our break-training dinner on board the Vanderbuggin's house-boat. Before going down there, however, it was our duty to be photographed with the priceless trophy. The christening ceremony, though solemn at the moment, had added some-

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what to our exuberance of spirit, so, having tidied ourselves up for the operation, we all helter skeltered noisily down to the photographer's, and, after the usual false starts and miss-fires, were duly snapped. We poured out again into the sunshine and made our way to Tims's.

"Two punts! Hang the cushions!"

"Paddles! Paddles! Where d'you keep your rotten paddles?"

"These'll do. Here you are, catch!"

Seizing up paddles from neighbouring punts—it didn't much matter, as they all belonged to Tims—we commandeered two extra-large punts. Six men boarded one, and the other five shoved off in the other.

"Bet you five bob we get there first!" yelled one of the five.

"Ha! Ha!" we yelled back. "Think you can paddle, do you? Five bob it is!"

"Now then, boys! All together—paddle!"

"Cox, you blue-faced monkey, get forrard and yell!"

Cox did as he was bid. His voice—what a voice!—boomed out of his diminutive body while we all paddled like maniacs, three on each side,

"Head! A-head! Look a-heaad!"

We all yelled together without stopping paddling.

The river was a mass of boats. Hundreds were returning from the prize-giving, and the whole tangled mass was moving up stream towards us in a solid phalanx.

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"Head!" They heard our yell, and saw our two punts bearing down upon them. Like London traffic when the fire-engine dashes out, they scattered right and left leaving a clear path for us. We churned the water with our six paddles, and, with the stream helping, went down the fairway like a steamer. We left the others by several lengths and shot under the bridge and past the Leander Club by ourselves. The top of the course was even more crowded than above the bridge, but our united voices cleared a way through like magic, and we arrived at the Vanderbuggins' barge, panting and exhausted. The others arrived shortly after, and tying up the punts we clambered aboard. To help to recover and to stimulate our already enormous appetites, a frock-coated Frenchman mixed a quantity of cunning cocktails which disappeared in a trice. Our host was very affable and charming, and told us that it was customary for all guests to the barge to wear a buttonhole of the Vanderbuggins' colours, red and white. If we wouldn't mind going along to the tent on shore we should find them being prepared for us. We didn't mind at all. A charming idea! Off we went and found several ladies clad in mourning—Heaven knows why, as they were *most* cheery—busily putting together with quick, deft fingers, buttonholes of red and white carnations with a perfect scent. Having decorated each other we returned to the sumptuously fitted barge, now brilliantly lighted by electricity, and were invited

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up on the top deck for dinner. There were several ladies on board, and we were introduced generally. An invisible band struck up a gay tune as we found our places and sat down at the two large tables charmingly laid out and decorated in red and white.

It was a perfect evening, warm and starlit, and the lights danced entrancingly on the water. Smart waiters hurried about serving. Everyone was in the gayest and most irresponsible mood, and the meal was an enormous success. The band received several encores, and to everyone's surprise the cry was taken up loudly from the river. Looking over, we saw that the tow-path was black with people watching the house-boat, and hundreds of punts covered the river in front of the barge. They seemed to enjoy the music as fully as we did, and gave loud encores after every piece.

At last our host rose. "Ladies and gentlemen!" he cried.

The tables fell silent. Next to me was a German lady without much English. She listened keenly to the speech which proceeded amid much applause and cheering. At its finish "For he's a jolly good fellow" was sung with great feeling, and three times three were given before we sat down. Then the German turned to me, "Is zat what you call your national ant-them?" she asked.

Keeping as straight a face as possible—she put the question in all seriousness—I gave her an

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explanation and she beamed upon me, fully satisfied that it was.

The meal came to an end at last. After the ladies had gone below, coffee and cigars appeared and the tables disappeared bodily. At their exit the band came in and played waltzes to which several of the braver and steadier spirits tried to dance. A sudden burst of cheering broke out from the river, and the stairs trembled under a rush of the feet. The upper deck became chaos. As if at a given signal crews appeared and came streaming up the stairs in gangs till it seemed that the whole of Oxford and Cambridge was aboard. The band played on calmly while these new arrivals helped themselves to cigars. A huge man in white flannels, a blazer, and a Scotch cap with ribbons floating out behind, picked a devious way through the crowd and tobacco-smoke and tapped the *chef d'orchestre* on the shoulder. He stopped playing, and the rest of them, like sheep without a shepherd, ceased in a wail of discord.

"Ah, wull sing!" announced the rowing man, beaming at the little musician.

"Certainly," said he. "What will you sing!"

"Ah, wull sing, 'Stop yourrr tickling, Jock.'"

The Scotchman rocked up and down upon his feet, and the band played the opening bars.

The rowing man went to the side of the barge and, making a megaphone of his hands, sung through the first verse in his rich native dialect with a voice like a stentor. Huge cheering from everybody broke out at the end of it, and the

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singer went solemnly through the rest of the verses. He was a triumphant success, but a sudden rush of unaccountable modesty overcame him, and he refused to take the encore. So the crowd of rowing men returned again to unsteady dancing, hugging each other tightly like bears. Unfortunately, however, they did not merely dance. Tables were knocked over and chairs were broken. The noise was indescribable. Our host, who during this time had been invisible, came on deck again. He was deeply pained by this chaotic behaviour and, getting hold of our captain, pleaded with him to get these uninvited intruders out of the house-boat. It was a difficult matter to arouse the men to a sense of their responsibility, but after some time our captain succeeded and, gradually, they drifted off into the noisy darkness of the night, until there were only some six of us left.

Our host, now much more easy in mind, proposed a trip in the motor boat, and gave the necessary orders. In two minutes she was alongside, and in another two we were aboard and ploughing our way up-stream. The river had cleared considerably. The crowd of spectators had disappeared. It was about midnight. So with full steam ahead we rushed up the quiet river to Marsh Lock. The night was very hot, and we were thankful to get cooled after our exertions by the draught made as we tore along. At the Lock we turned, and after going back and round Temple Island returned once

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more to the house-boat and took our leave. All the punts had gone except one, half filled with water and fitted with a single pole. The problem of transport was solved by the sight of another boat, deserted and empty, floating along down the booms. This was rescued promptly, and the other four men got aboard leaving us two, the only representatives of our crew, in possession of the half-filled one-poled punt. We got in, up to our ankles in water, and, bidding our host a grateful good night, poled off into the darkness. The other four had disappeared. So we punted steadily along towards the bridge. The current was very strong. It was cold work standing in water, so the pole was used with a will. Suddenly it stuck in the bottom, and with a yell of dismay we found ourselves adrift, helpless.

"Well, I'm jiggered!"

"Let's yell," said I.

So we lifted up our voices and cried aloud for help. No answer comforted us, but our punt suddenly bumped into the booms. Good business! We pulled ourselves along, slowly and laboriously, shouting from time to time. At last someone answered and asked what our trouble was. We yelled an explanation, and a punt shot out from a lawn just above Phyllis Court and came alongside. We recognised him as a Cambridge Blue. He invited us to come ashore and warm the cockles of our hearts with a drink. We hailed him as a friend and accepted with joy. There were two ladies and another

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man on the lawn, and they welcomed us and gave us of their best. Sunrise caught us still there, smoking and talking, so we tore ourselves away from their hospitable board. The Cambridge man accompanied us. He was staying at the Red Lion. It was shut and showed no sign of life. We gave him a leg up on to the verandah, and he found an open window.

"I say," said the man with me. "Who were those people we have just left?"

"Haven't a notion," said the Light Blue cheerily. "Never seen them before in my life. Good-night." And he disappeared through the window.

We walked through the streets dead tired and very wet. An occasional policeman stared at us, but we hurried by and at last came to the house. A light was burning in the dining-room. We crept in and found the scout snoring, fully dressed on the sofa with his mouth wide open, and a pipe lying on the floor. Leaving him there, we crept up the stairs of the sleeping house, and in five minutes we too were snoring in broad daylight.

CHAPTER XL.

LIFE.

THE undergraduate—he had not actually taken his degree, though he had passed the final schools—was awakened by the scout tapping at the door. For a time he lay still, half awake, dreaming. The Henley sun flooded the room. At last he yawned cavernously, and stretching himself, tumbled out of bed. “Great Scott! Henley’s over.”

He sat for a moment regretfully thinking what a ripping three weeks it had been, the cricket with a stump and ball in the garden; the evening expeditions on the quiet river; the glorious races they had rowed and won; the wonderful last night dinner, and the extraordinary fact of having no headache at the moment. He was recalled to the present by yells from the bath-room, and rushing out joined in the scrum for first bath.

Breakfast was a noisy, cheery meal. They were all, apparently, scattering to different ends of the earth for the long Vacation—one was starting that morning for Canada, another was going to some seaside place in France, a third

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was making a sea voyage in a sailing ship. The undergraduate hadn't made any plans yet. Pipes were pulled out after breakfast, and tobacco-smoke floated all over the house as they ran about and into each other's rooms packing, laughing, and talking.

"I think next term's one of the slackest terms of the year."

"Absolutely rotten," shouted someone in answer. "Foul weather and no rowing except the Fours."

"How about the trials!" called out someone in another room.

"Ho! *You* won't get into that," said the first man derisively.

"Coaching freshers is the limit, *I* think," said the undergraduate. "I shall try and get out of it next—good God!" he stopped suddenly.

"What's the row?" asked the man in his room. "Lost a stud?"

The undergraduate did not answer for a moment. He was staring blankly out of the window. The other man turned and looked at him. "Are you going to cat!" he said. "If so——"

"Cat! No!" said the undergraduate. "But I shall not be up next year. I've finished. I'm down. Good Lord!"

The laughter continued from the other rooms, but the undergraduate sat quiet on his bed. He was down. He was no longer at the 'Varsity. "How I wish," he thought, "that I *should* have

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to coach freshers next term. No more rowing for me. My time's up. I'm down. I can go on smoking from now to Doomsday—so long as I've got money to pay for the baccy. How infernally rotten though. I'd much rather train. Down! No more Eights dinners, no more schools, no more don raggings. How appalling! Dash it! I *can't* be down—it's a mistake. Of course, I shall go up next year—Eh? What? What did you say?"

The other man was yelling something at him.

"I'm sorry. I—I was thinking."

"What are you going to do?" asked the other man.

"Do? What d' you mean, do?"

"Well, are you going to keep a pub, or go into the army, or teach roller-skating, or what?"

"What am I going to do?—God knows."

He lapsed into silence again. He *was* down. What was he going to do? What *was* he going to do. He hadn't an idea. Do? What on earth—Why, he'd have to earn his living. Earn his living! The thing had never struck him. It was absurd. How was he going to do it? A degree? Yes, he'd got a degree, a Great's degree, but what good would that do him. He couldn't cash it at a bank. He was really and actually down! How infernally rotten. He was at a loose end. Oxford! And these lucky devils were all going up again next term, while he—what *was* he going to do? Yes, that was the point, what was he going to do? He'd have to do something. That was obvious,

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but what? "Suppose I'd better pack," he said, rising.

He did so as quietly and as slowly as possible. He did not want to hurry away and cut himself off from the last of Oxford, but it was impossible to be melancholy for long in such cheery society, so he cast off all gloomy thoughts as to the future, and remained an undergraduate with the rest of them until the cabs came up and the luggage was piled on. Then the crew walked down in a body to the station. The undergraduate tipped the scout and wrung him affectionately by the hand. After all they were a much maligned set, these scouts, and were, when all was said and done, jolly good fellows, *Oxford* scouts, dash it all! "Good-bye and good luck!" and he hurried down to the station with the rest of them.

The gardens in front of the little houses were bright with many coloured flowers, and as they turned the corner at the bottom of the street and glanced back, the college flag still floated out from its flag-staff over the house which had known them for the last three weeks. The approach to the station was a mass of oarsmen, everybody was departing that morning. They stopped at the little tobacco shop at the corner and laid in fresh supplies, and then crossed over to the station. The cab had already eased itself of the luggage and was waiting to be paid off. The captain was left to fill the post of paymaster while the rest went in to get tickets. The crowd

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round the booking-office was enormous, but at last they got tickets, one man being deputed to buy them all. The train was in, so they hurriedly bought many papers and found a carriage. The whistle blew as they crowded in and, slamming the door, they were borne swiftly away towards London.

At Slough the undergraduate changed. He climbed out of the carriage after shaking hands all round, and shut the door behind him.

"Good-bye. Hope you'll have good Vacs. I'll dash up for Toggers and Eights week next year—if I can."

He waved his hand and the train went out again leaving him alone on the platform. He got into the other train and pulled out his pipe.

"Well," he thought, "there goes the last of Oxford. Another dog has had his day, poor devil! But what a day! Oxford, four years of it! By Jove, it may be awful to be down, but it's worth it. Worth it! I should think so, I *have* had a time! Four of the most glorious years a man could possibly have anywhere on earth. Good old St. John's Think of last Eights. Wasn't it gorgeous! Up three places and fourth on the river. Priceless effort that. And we may go head next year! Head, and I shan't be rowing! Oh well, some other chap will take my place and enjoy it as I have done. Enjoy! Why there isn't a word in the language to express it. Oxford is the most—the most—well hang it, it is Oxford? What more can I say?"

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He shook out his pipe carefully and reloaded it seriously.

"And so my undergraduate days are at an end. The position is a serious one, far too serious for any hasty decision. I am, at length, face to face with life, with the problem of earning my daily bread. The solution is at present somewhat doubtful. The world, however, is a large place and a man may, with determination, make himself a name. There is the stage for instance. But no. For a man, I always think that ought to be a last resort before taking to sweeping crossings—besides, I wasn't in the O.U.D.S. Cancel the stage. How about the Church? H'm, it means tea-fights and chit-chat—I couldn't stand that, and a dog-collar and a black straw wouldn't suit me, and then, too, the Bishop of London is still a young man—no room for me there. Of course there's the Bar, and I suppose eventually the Woolsack. That's really not such a bad notion. Bit stuffy to wear a wig all day, but still I'll think that over. Or the Army, but I don't fancy hanging about stage-doors after chorus girls, or wearing stays. Army scratched. What else is there? Let me see, doctoring? No, it's as bad as being a fireman—liable to turn out at any hour of night. Besides, I always manage to cut myself when I carve. I say though! Play-writing! That's the notion. Judging from the shows one sees in town it must be the easiest thing going. The only thing against me though is my hand-writing. It's so awfully bad and I should hate to

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think of the poor little typewriter girl worrying like anything to make it out. It would be a beastly shame. There doesn't seem to be much else left, except perhaps the Navy. That would be all right except that I'm too old, and then too, how could one go round in bogey if one is at sea? and I shouldn't like to have to chuck golf—H'm. Here's the jolly old station and I haven't arrived at any satisfactory decision. Hullo! There's a face I know! By Jove! the Guv'nor! Hurrah!"

The train came to a standstill and the man leaped out.

"Hullo, my boy," said his father. "How are you?"

"Frightfully well, thanks. How are you, sir? —I've been trying to decide what I'm going to do now that I'm down."

The Guv'nor laughed.

"What already? Well, well, we'll discuss that after dinner to-night."

And they did.

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